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A POSITIVE PROPOSAL

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A MAGAZINE OF IDEAS

IN THE MERCURY'S OPINION,		5
KOREA: A POSITIVE PROPOSAL	Senator Styles Bridges	11
LETTER FROM CAIRO: <i>Egypt's Middle-Class Revolution</i>	Mark Alexander	20
FREDERICK VANDERBILT FIELD — FROM RICHES TO REDS	Julian Maxwell	31
WHAT IS "GUILT BY ASSOCIATION"?	Sidney Hook	37
LETTER FROM DENMARK:		
<i>Roedgroed, Snaps, and Smorrebroed</i>	Sven Lollik	45
THE PRIMACY OF POLITICS	James Burnham	52
IN OUR READERS' OPINION		64
TAXES AND INITIATIVE	Hobart L. Pendleton	70
POISON IN EVERY POT?	James Rorty	73
NEWSPAPER WITHOUT NEWS	Anthony Harrigan	84
FILM: <i>Chaplin as Chaplin</i>	William Barrett	90
CONFESSIONS OF A WRITING TEACHER	Isaac Rosenfeld	96
BOOKS:		
<i>The Wholeness of Literature</i>	William Phillips	103
<i>Clichés and Shibboleths</i>	Frank Meyer	108
<i>Ways of Treason</i>	Nathaniel Weyl	111
BOOKS IN SHORT		114
DOWN TO EARTH: <i>First Snow</i>	Alan Devoe	118
DAUGHTS OF OLD BOURBON:		
<i>Mr. Chaplin and the Fifth Freedom</i>	William Bradford Huie	123

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In the



MERCURY'S OPINION

The Problem of a Ton of Coal

ONE OF THE WAYS to begin understanding the disordered world of today is to think of a ton of coal.

Italy has no coal. Yet every year many thousands of tons of coal *must* arrive in the Po Valley else there will be no electricity and the Italian industries will halt. Italy *must* have coal; her life depends on it.

Formerly Italy got her coal from two places: Britain and Poland. But now the British mines are old and tired and nationalized, the seams are thin, the number of miners decreases every year. Italy has offered to send hundreds of Italians to work the tired, thin, British seams, but Britain has said no. And the Polish mines are back of the Iron Curtain.

Polish coal is available to Italy only on Soviet Russia's business and ideological terms.

But Italy *must* have coal, and every day the coal arrives, at Genoa and Naples, in big, efficient ships. The coal from the United States, torn from those big, thick seams in Kentucky and West Virginia by John Lewis' miners, who ride in new Fords and Chevrolets and send their sons to play football for Notre Dame. And the coal is transported, first from the mines to Norfolk by railroad men who get frequent pay raises and higher pensions, and then from Norfolk to Genoa by seamen who strike every year or so for higher standards.

Well, what's wrong with this? What's wrong with our "selling"

American coal to Italy, thus creating prosperity for American miners, railroad men, and seamen? And bringing plenty of electricity to Italy?

Several things are wrong. The American coal, naturally, is expensive. It costs \$18 to mine a ton of American coal and deliver it to the Po Valley. The same coal from Poland would cost \$6.

Where's the \$18 coming from? The Italians are a poor people. How can they afford \$18-a-ton coal? Using such expensive coal, how can they hold down the prices of their manufactured products so that they can compete in world markets? And what do they have to sell to Americans to get the \$18 with which to pay for the coal?

We have to give them the \$18 which they then pay "us" for the ton of coal. Else Italy would collapse and "go Communist." Who gives them the \$18? Who else has it? The American taxpayers, who include the miners, the railroad men, and the seamen.

And those big, rich, thick seams in Kentucky and West Virginia? How long will they remain big, rich, and thick? Five years? Ten years at most? Then where will the coal come from? Who'll send the coal to keep Pittsburgh and Cleveland running?

Take the other side of the world. Japan. An industrial nation with industrious people. But no water power. Japan *must* have coal. Formerly Japan got most of her indis-

pensable supplies of coal from Manchuria.

There's plenty of coal in Manchuria today, at \$6 or less a ton, but Manchuria belongs to Soviet Russia. And Japan can have Manchurian coal only by "breaking away from the Americans" and doing business on Soviet Russia's political and economic terms.

So Japan is getting coal — from the same place as Italy.

Every day the big ships arrive in Tokyo and Yokohama. Only in Japan, the distance being much greater, the price is \$24 a ton.

Coal at \$24 a ton is like burning gold. It's fantastic. How can Japanese industries ever "come back" on \$24-a-ton coal? And what can the Japanese sell to get the \$24? They can't, so America supplies both the coal and the dollars.

How long can this go on?

There you have a part of Soviet foreign policy. This policy, said by some to be enigmatic, is as simple as a ton of coal. During the Second World War the Soviets grabbed the Polish and Manchurian coal. Now they are waiting — waiting for "economic tensions" like these coal prices to collapse the West.

Sure, this waiting game causes tensions in the Soviet world, too. What about those Polish and Manchurian miners who need to sell coal and then buy the products of Italian and Japanese mills? Don't they feel the tension? Yes, but the Soviets

are certain that their system can survive tensions better than ours. The Polish and Manchurian miners can be sent to slave camps.

That's our problem in the months to come. The problem of the ton of coal.

An Effort to Intimidate the Press

THIS IS WRITTEN, of course, before the election, and we do not know whether Senator Harley M. Kilgore, of West Virginia, will be defeated or returned to the Senate. We do know, however, of his effort to intimidate the free press of his own state, and we believe our readers will want to understand this effort.

We don't know Senator Kilgore. We've never met the man. We wish him no personal harm, nor do we bear him any personal ill will. Politically, however, he has a record of having been an assiduous worker in the Red vineyard; therefore, we hoped the free citizens of West Virginia would call him home from Washington. As our contribution to clarity, we dug up the record and presented it in the October MERCURY almost without comment.

We then followed an old MERCURY policy. Since Mencken's day, THE MERCURY has been the friend and the ally of most of the newspapers in the country, particularly the small press — the weeklies and small dailies which have limited national and international facilities. We gave

our article to every newspaper in West Virginia, with full permission to reprint the entire article.

A great newspaper with a courageous editor, the Charleston *Daily Mail*, led the way in West Virginia. The *Mail* spread the article on its front page and asked Senator Kilgore to reply to it.

He replied — in a manner somewhat typical of latter-day "great liberals" when confronted by their records. Within an hour he filed a \$2,000,000 libel suit against the newspaper.

The tactic was obvious. He knew that many other newspapers, even small weeklies, were preparing to publish the article. Libel suits cost money just to defend; so the Senator knew that many small editors, struggling to pay their bills, would be unable to call his bluff.

What ensued was not pleasant. A number of editors invested in telephone calls to New York, seeking legal reassurance. We cited every document, then gathered the documents into a pamphlet and sent it to them. We supplied reprints for distribution, trying to relieve the West Virginia press of all possible responsibility. We wished for some civil liberties union strong enough to accept the Senator's challenge on behalf of his state's press. A few newspapers defied him anyhow, and published the article in full.

But generally the tactic worked.

The Senator was able to campaign among thousands of voters in remote areas who never had a chance to examine his record set down in cold print.

As this is written, we don't know whether he'll win or not. If he does, his will not be the first victory won by a "man of the people" with such tactics.

Can We Win by "Leaning on the Enemy"?

GENERAL JAMES VAN FLEET's military policy in Korea is a simple one: Our troops must "lean on the enemy." If you don't lean on the enemy, he'll lean on you.

This means that we must conduct "aggressive patrol action" and "probing attacks." No Communist sentry must feel safe from sudden attack. Our soldiers must always fight for the next hilltop.

If you are being leaned on, you are under tension. To relieve the tension you must either step back from time to time or else you must exert effort to reverse the leaning process.

There is tension in the camp of the military side that is being leaned on. There is irritation and uneasiness. Week by week there is a little falling back, and each step backward only increases the tension.

This is old and sound military policy. When you are facing an enemy, you can't relax in your foxholes. You can't wait for him

to come after you. You can't forever be fighting off his patrols and his probing attacks. If you do, you invite tension. You've got to lean on him, and the heavier you lean on him, the better.

The high-level argument about "liberation or containment," which we have discussed and will be discussing in the future in these pages, comes down to this same simple principle.

Since 1945 Communist power, both political and military, has been leaning on the non-Communist world. In 1946-49 just this leaning weight of Communist power was enough to force retreats in Czechoslovakia and China. Soviet Russia won her 600,000,000 new slaves just by leaning on them. She almost got Italy, Greece, and South Korea.

The policy of containment was the effort to make the non-Communist world strong enough to withstand the leaning Russian weight without further retreats. A measure of equilibrium has been restored. Much of the tension has been relieved in the leaned-on areas around the Soviet periphery. In places like Iran, Berlin, and Indo-China the tension is still serious.

The Americans who are now proposing that we proceed from "containment" to "liberation" — these persons only want us to start leaning on the Russian world. They want us to take all the tension off our

world and start generating it behind the Iron and Bamboo curtains.

During the past seven years, with the Soviets leaning against us, there has been no question of any victory for our side: only the question of where we would have to yield next to Soviet pressure. The belief now is that if only we will exert enough effort to lean against our enemies, then we can cease worrying about what our next loss may be, and begin hoping for our next victory.

Now Is The Time For Positive Proposals

IN 1953, under whatever administration, this country must struggle to regain a feeling of dynamism and of knowing where it is going. We must leave to the historians the task of deciding who was right and who was wrong in 1933, 1939, 1945, and 1949. A bear had been born into the world and was growing during those years. Some Americans watched his growth and urged that we do whatever possible to retard him; others watched his growth and did all they could to nourish him.

Whatever we did, whether we were retarders or nourishers, we now have the task of corralling and disarming the bear before there can be peace and low taxes again. We need wisdom and positive action.

The article by United States Senator Styles Bridges in this issue deserves the attention of every

thoughtful American. It clears the air and provides a basis for establishing a dynamic national policy.

Communism and Legitimate Opinion

TOTALITARIAN COMMUNISM is a conspiracy. This is the first fact to be understood about it. It is not a "point of view" — whatever its dupes and agents may think and say. A point of view implies diversity: that there are other points from which to view things. Communism vehemently denies the legitimacy of other points of view.

It is not a competitor in the free market of ideas; it would liquidate the free market of ideas. Over much of the globe it has already done so.

Some people have taken a long time to understand this fundamental fact. Others don't understand it yet. They call any move against the Communist conspiracy an attack on freedom of opinion. But organized Communism is not an opinion; it is a conspiracy.

Denigrators of this country, foreign and domestic, continually imply that opinion is no longer free in the United States. Sometimes, more brazenly, they state it explicitly as a fact. Their proof? That a man is no longer free to hold the heretical opinion of Communism.

This country has been a haven for heretics from the beginning. Heretics founded some of its first settlements. The right to hold heretical

opinions is jealously guarded by American laws; it has the solid support of American tradition. Americans would not be prone to lightly cast it aside. But totalitarian Communism is not a heresy; it is a conspiracy.

A heretic may be scorned and derided by his neighbors; it is their right. But a heretic must expect scorn and derision; that is what it is to be a heretic. In this country a heretic, if he keeps within the law, goes his way. A conspirator, if he is caught, goes to the clink.

All this high-level argument about reconciling the rights of a free society with the necessities of national security comes down to this simple distinction.

One man who has tried to make this distinction clear is Sidney Hook, professor of philosophy at New York University. An essay by Dr. Hook, "Heresy, Yes — Conspiracy, No!",

is regarded as a landmark in the earnest effort to decide how to deal with the member of the Communist Party in the United States. In this issue we publish Dr. Hook's article, "What Is 'Guilt by Association'?", as a contribution to the elucidation of a very jumbled notion. We invite comment on Dr. Hook's position.

DURING 1953 the MERCURY will publish a number of articles on the problems in our schools, largely deriving from the tensions of the cold war. How can teachers remain free and still answer the questions asked of them, quite properly, by an active and interested citizenry. How can we preserve our treasured and traditional academic freedom while we are repelling and overcoming the threat of totalitarianism? These questions are all part of a larger discussion now being conducted across the nation.

Styles Bridges

U. S. Senator from New Hampshire

KOREA:

A Positive Proposal

Now that the elections of 1952 are over, it is of the utmost urgency that we conduct a truly great debate: a debate on what to do *now* about the Korean war. This debate must be conducted by patriots who are seeking neither partisan advantage nor the vindication of past position. The issue must be proposed action. And from this debate must come clear national understanding and new national resolution.

Some may have hoped that the political campaign itself would produce such a debate. But it did not. It was too often an exercise in epithet, and to what extent it has

helped us toward national decision remains to be seen.

Now is the time for calm proposal. Now is the time for the advancement of ideas for national acceptance or rejection. It's a time for relaxing our indignations toward one another; for seeking solutions; for finding strength and determination.

In our republic one man is said to be as good as another. But it doesn't follow that one man is as wise as another; and what is needed now is wisdom. We must seek to discover and then to empower wisdom and foresight. The new administration must find leaders who can produce ideas which will prevail.

At stake in our lifetimes is the cause of America, which, in the words of Tom Paine, is the cause of mankind. This is the cause of liberty among men; the cause of free government and individual responsibility. This cause can win only if we are both wise and strong.

What began in Korea as a bold retort to armed Communism may become a trap to use up lives and resources. Styles Bridges, veteran Republican Senator from New Hampshire, here proposes a positive foreign policy for the U. S. in Asia. Senator Bridges is ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Now is the time for forging policy, for charting the course.

THE FIRST POINT on which we need national agreement is the *fact* of the war. There is, indeed, a war going on. It is not merely a Korean war; it is a world war; the fighting in Korea is only the most active portion of it. The Third World War is not in the future; we are in it now; we were in it even before the Second World War ended. The Third World War is the oldest of all wars: it's the determination of totalitarian conspiracy to destroy the revolutionary idea of free government and individual importance.

So we are at war. And we are likely to be at war for many years. The President we have elected will be a war President; our economy will continue to be a war economy. Our taxes will be high; our sons will be drafted into the military; our responsibilities will be heavy.

No responsible Republican or Democrat, general or admiral, to my knowledge, has any plan for "ending" this war. We cannot end it, short of world victory, because we are being warred upon by implacable foes who must, by their nature, continue their aggression, and who are determined to destroy us.

There is no parallel nor latitude nor national boundary on which we can "sign an armistice" and "go home." The national boundary lines exist only in *our* geography books, not in

those of our enemy. We can't retreat to victory. We can only press on to peace.

We are in a great world power struggle. It is hoped that the area of fighting can be restricted. But in my view it is a struggle which must end in the disarmament of our enemy or defeat for America. Since we cannot withdraw to peace, we cannot withdraw at all. We are the responsible custodians of a precious idea, so we must either prevail or perish.

As far as I can determine, this view of the *fact* of the war is shared, in the main, by Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, and MacArthur, as well as by most responsible political leaders. I believe that as a nation of free men of goodwill, we should gather strength first from solid agreement on this point.

Once we concede the *fact* of the war, then we can readily perceive that this one war, only for purposes of discussion, can be divided into four "fronts" or sectors: the Arctic, the European, the Middle Eastern, and the Asiatic.

There apparently is no disagreement at all among Americans over the development of our Arctic bases. These bases, frankly military, are moves to gain us advantage in the power struggle.

There has been little basic disagreement among Americans over our moves to counter the enemy in the European sector. These moves,

which are just as frankly military, have been designed to prevent, if possible, any more of Europe from falling before Communist force. Both Republicans and Democrats supported the Berlin airlift, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. There has been proper argument over the amount of European spending; and patience and diplomacy of a high order will be required in our dealing with the European nations; but there is little argument now over the propriety of our trying to aid what is left of free Europe to strengthen itself.

Nor has there been any basic disagreement over our Middle Eastern policies. Perhaps the most admirable action of the Truman administration was the forthright manner in which the President co-operated with the 80th Congress to fill the vacuum in Greece and Turkey caused by the collapse of British power in that area. The Turkish armored divisions today are the strongest anywhere directly facing the Soviet Union. Our indecision in Iran, like indecision anywhere, can lead to new disasters on this front.

IT HAS BEEN in Asia that the cause of freedom has suffered its most shattering losses to the cause of Communism, so, naturally, it is here that we have had our deepest disagreements, born of despair. And it is with this sector that this proposal is concerned.

China, the heart of Asia, was lost to the enemy. Whether it was lost by Roosevelt's listening to Hiss at Yalta; by Chiang's alleged intransigence; by Stilwell's petulance; by Marshall's somnolence; or by the chicanery and perhaps treachery of the Institute of Pacific Relations — all these we have debated with a good deal of light as well as heat. The *fact* now is that the heart of Asia was lost, and virtually every American, except those who support the cause of Communism, now agrees with General MacArthur that this was a tragedy for which we shall be paying for generations. China can be regained only on that day, probably distant, when armed Communism collapses in Asia and our idea prevails.

One other fact, however, needs to be remembered. At no time has any responsible American, Republican or Democrat, advocated large-scale ground warfare for our idea on the mainland of Asia. We have not thus far commanded the human or material resources for such a war.

On January 1, 1950, the free world held only these positions in Asia: on the mainland we held the South Korean "beachhead," the island of Hongkong, a portion of Indo-China, and British Malaya. India had become neutralist. Off the coast of Asia we held the islands of Japan, Okinawa, Formosa, and the Philippines. Indonesia, too, had become neutralist, with no West-

erner allowed to own property there.

And here, as far as I can ascertain them, and without partisan coloration, are the basic facts about South Korea.

Beginning in 1947 we had withdrawn all of our troops except a regimental combat team from South Korea. The State Department, which was in charge, followed two practices in meeting congressional criticism of South Korean weakness. Spokesmen for the department either contended that heavy arms should not be supplied the South Koreans out of fear that they might attack the North Koreans, or else the spokesmen assured Congress that the South Korean army was increasing in strength and quite capable of repelling invasion.

The decision to withdraw from South Korea was dictated by the reality of our shrinking military establishment: the size of our army in 1947 simply did not allow for enough troops to garrison South Korea.

The only outspoken advocates of aid to South Korea during this period were a few members of Congress, a small minority of intellectuals who had correctly diagnosed the nature of the Communist conspiracy since as early as 1932, a few military men, and a few businessmen with experience in the Orient. To these observers it was apparent that a military vacuum was being

created in South Korea into which the enemy was certain to expand: the only question was when — and this came on June 25, 1950.

THE PRESIDENT has been criticized, justly, in my view, for committing our forces to the defence of South Korea without formally consulting Congress. But this can be said: he consulted the military; and had he formally consulted Congress there is no doubt that he would have been given almost unanimous support, just as he was supported by the nation.

On the question of the commitment of ground forces, there was a small but important body of opinion against it. This body did not include General MacArthur, who advised the President that intervention would be ineffective without the use of ground troops. It did include certain leaders of the Air Force who believed that we could punish the aggression with air and sea power — bombardment and blockade — and try in this manner to force the Communist armies to retreat.

But, once again, the *fact*: we did intervene with air, sea, and ground forces; our men fought valiantly; and the cause of freedom was well served. I am not one who would say that blood has been shed in vain in Korea. That war is being fought for great purpose, and the young men who die on those bloody ridges can sleep as peacefully as their older

brothers who died at Bastogne or Iwo Jima.

One reality we should have understood from the beginning, however. Once our ground forces were joined on the Asiatic mainland with those of the enemy, it became unlikely that we could ever, short of the collapse of world Communist power, establish a "line" where we could find "peace" and "go home." For the Communists are in this war to stay; fighting us on the ground is an advantage to them; one of the tactics by which they hope to destroy us is to force us to spend ourselves into slavery through war and armament.

Once we had joined battle in Korea, in my opinion, there could be no peace for our side in that unhappy peninsula, short of final, *world* victory. The Communists on any day, of course, may decide to cut their losses and give us an "armistice." They gave Chiang several "armistices" while they were destroying his armies in China. But while these "armistices" may mean a temporary lull in the dying, they will not mean peace, and we cannot go home.

Therefore, once we had shattered the particular Communist phalanxes known as "North Koreans," it should have been no surprise to us that other Communist armies known as "Chinese" moved into the breach. The Communist armies may differ in tongue and uniform, but they are

all one army, all directed by the same staff.

THE "MacArthur Controversy," it seems to me, stemmed from this basic misunderstanding of the nature of the Korean war. Had MacArthur been allowed to "bomb Manchurian airfields," he would not have "precipitated the Third World War." That war, unhappily, was already in progress. Nor does it seem logical that MacArthur would have been able to win his victory, unify Korea, find peace, and come home "by Christmas." I believed then, however, and I believe now that a resolute show of force might have caused the Communists to back down, thus postponing the ultimate reckoning in Asia. It was a calculated risk which our leaders did not take.

Had MacArthur bombed the airfields, he might have been able to establish a line at the Yalu River, but we would have found no permanent peace, for millions of cheap Chinese infantrymen would have remained to face him. MacArthur himself had often warned against using American armies to attack the bottomless feather mattress of Asia.

By the same token, are those people in this country or in the United Nations who shout that we could have had peace if only we had restrained MacArthur at the 38th Parallel — are they being very realistic? Why should our enemies have given us peace at the 38th

Parallel and allowed us to "go home"? The war is to their advantage: if it were not they would have ended it long ago. The goal of the Communist conspiracy is not any particular parallel or latitude; the goal is the destruction of American power. What better way to contribute to our destruction than to have us involved in war, against their faceless millions, in a decisionless area, with great propaganda disadvantages, at the end of an 8,000-mile supply line?

There is not now, nor since June 25, 1950, nor will there be, any action which we can take *in Korea itself* which will bring us anything more than some temporary and mutually convenient stalemate in the fighting. Lasting peace can come to Korea only with the collapse of armed Communist power in Asia.

WHAT COURSE then can we follow? In my opinion we must first acknowledge all the foregoing realities, then we must assess the anti-Communist resources in Asia, and, employing these resources, we must plan the long war which must end in the collapse of the Communist world.

Why can't we, as a tactic, withdraw from Korea and retire to our "island bastions"?

It is perfectly possible, in my judgment, gradually to withdraw American infantrymen and artillerymen and substitute trained South Koreans. But it is neither feasible

nor desirable from a military or moral viewpoint to withdraw and abandon twenty million resolute anti-Communists.

As a matter of fact, it might well prove a stunning blow for freedom if we could disengage our ground troops and supply and support the South Koreans or any other Asian ally so that they could defend themselves with our help. Such an action would furnish vivid proof of our intention not to abandon any nation which chooses freedom.

By withdrawing we could not "come home." We could only withdraw to Japan, the enemy would move menacingly nearer, and the "war" would continue, with ground pressure increasing on Indo-China, Malaya, and India. Withdrawal, moreover, would have the effect of discouraging our potential allies in Asia at the very time when we need to rally them.

We can't "win" in Korea; we can't withdraw; so we have to stay, not in despair but with resolution. We have to stay in the manner which will be most advantageous to the cause of freedom and disadvantageous to the enemy.

Our immediate task is to understand, enumerate, and then to rally our Asiatic allies. And these allies, to the everlasting credit of America, are numerous.

Foremost are the South Koreans themselves. Here are a truly gallant people, led by a good man with a

demonstrated love of liberty: Dr. Syngman Rhee. These people, after cruel suffering, ask only arms and the right to fight.

As long as men can have an example like South Korea, the world is not yet even beginning to be lost to cynicism, despair, and totalitarian slavery.

NEXT AMONG OUR ALLIES are the seventy million Japanese. And here is a phenomenon. These people, the most industrious in all Asia, were defeated by our arms, a defeat which even included a Hiroshima. Yet so intelligent and humanitarian was our occupation that today we can depend on them.

Not only can we safely arm the South Koreans for service in their own country or elsewhere; we can do the same for the Japanese.

Similarly for the Philippines where we have more friends. Our fifty-year occupation of these islands resulted, not in the usual hatreds, but in mutual respect, and today these people have beaten down their own Communist threat and are ready to march beside us and beside all the other peoples of Asia who aspire to freedom.

In Indo-China our cause is confused by the element of French colonialism. The Indo-Chinese attitude toward the French is not quite the same as the Filipino and Japanese attitude toward the Americans. There is confusion as to

whether the French are fighting for French colonial rights or for freedom for the Indo-Chinese. This is a problem for American diplomacy and for French hearts. Frenchmen are fighting gallantly enough in the marshes of Asia, but they can fight effectively only when they realize that the days of colonialism are past, and that the war now is for the freedom of Asia, not for the partitioning of it by Western powers.

Malaya, under British leadership, is growing stronger. Its jungle Communists are being countered by Malaysians themselves, four million of whom have just been granted a citizenship they have not previously enjoyed.

India and Indonesia are problems for diplomacy.

This brings us to the controversial island of Formosa, where there is a considerable resource for Asiatic freedom waiting to be exploited. On this island, with a remnant of his army, lives a man who has spent his long life fighting for his conception of a free China.

Is it too much to hope, now that we have endured the China tragedy, that here in America we can cease our bickerings over Formosa and calmly fit it into our over-all plan for the salvation of Asia?

If there breathes an able-bodied man on Formosa who yearns to fight Communists, is there any reason why we should hinder him? If Chiang and his men want to travel

the hundred miles to the mainland and spend the rest of their lives trying to throttle Communists, should we not wish them godspeed? We gave Soviet Russia more than eleven billion dollars in Lend-Lease during World War II. It would seem that our conscience and our purse would permit us to furnish adequate aid to those actively fighting tyranny today.

For years we have heard little but talk about how many millions of Asiatics are arrayed against us. What we need to recognize now is that there are even more millions of Asiatics waiting to be arrayed against Communism. They are waiting only on American leadership.

ONCE we have assessed our position in Asia, then the policy we should pursue becomes clearer. We should integrate our Asiatic policy with our Arctic policy, our European policy, and our Middle Eastern policy so that we have a world policy with one clearly proclaimed objective: the ultimate disarming of Communism.

Our objective in Asia is to apply the maximum pressure against the Asiatic periphery of the Communist world, so that the Communist world can be collapsed.

This means, it seems to me, that we must hold South Korea permanently, either with American troops, or with South Koreans, or with whatever other Asiatic or free

world resources we can develop. There should be no political restrictions on weapons *used in the field against armed Communists*. We didn't hesitate to employ atomic weapons against the Japanese in 1945; if they can be used in 1953 to save American and South Korean lives, as well as to disarm Communists, then why shouldn't we use them?

And why should we allow the Chinese Communists to feel secure against attack in other areas? Shouldn't free world airplanes fly daily and nightly over any area of China, dropping at the very least leaflets and supplies? Why shouldn't the Chinese Communists live in fear of a commando raid along any area of their long coast line on any dark night? Why should the tyrant in any Chinese village feel that he can sleep without fear?

Has the time come when it can be said that American policy safeguards the sleep of tyrants? For one hundred and fifty years America's sympathies were with the oppressed patriot and his plans for bringing death to tyranny. With all our complicated arguments about liberation or containment, can we ever evolve a simpler or more effective policy?

Our policy in Asia, as in the rest of the world, should never contribute to the security of Communist individuals or governments, but to their insecurity. Therefore, no merchant ship should be allowed to approach the Communist coast

of Asia, or indeed any other Communist nation, unless the proposed exchange is clearly to the advantage of our cause. Why shouldn't all merchant ships bound for Communist shores in Asia be required to stop at Singapore, or Manila, or Tokyo, so that their cargo can be certified as proceeding to our advantage. If the ship isn't operating to the advantage of free men who are dying on Korean ridges, then let the ship be turned back. Or sunk if it proceeds.

FOR TWENTY YEARS NOW, at least since 1933, the cause of slavery has been advancing, while the cause of freedom has been in confusion and retreat. It has even been said that the cause of freedom has lost its dynamism, that men no longer yearn for it. Yet heretofore the idea of freedom has been the most dynamic idea in the world.

The time seems to have come for America, not to find a new policy, but to readopt a policy which has served us well. We need only send the word that once again our sympathies are with the enemies of tyranny — that every little man on earth who yearns to settle his score with despotism needs only to work and watch and remain resolute and, sooner or later, by land, sea or air, we'll send them aid and sustenance.

When we get back to this policy, then the armies of Communism which now seem so formidable, will scatter as they have always scattered before individual resolution. In the age-old battle between the ordered phalanx of tyranny and the patriot crouched behind the tree with his musket, the initial odds have always favored tyranny.

It's America's role in the world today to change the odds in freedom's favor.

Peace Talk

» Is it possible that Jacob Malik did not wish to enter into any truce negotiations in July, 1951? Lilian Anshen Seidel, Mr. Malik's English teacher, who had helped him in the preparation of the text of his so-called truce proposal of June 23, 1951, said in the *New Yorker* of February 9, 1952:

"Mr. Malik had no idea, I feel certain, that the American press would take what was to him a routine propaganda speech and present it as a solid Soviet appeal for peace in Korea."

LETTER FROM CAIRO:

Egypt's Middle-Class Revolution

Mark Alexander

LOOK OUT!" Hassan shouted into my ear, tugging me back into the center of the road as a gust of wind blew a shower of sparks at us from the burning building. I raised a hasty arm to keep my tarboosh from slipping off (it was safer to wear a tarboosh in Cairo just then, when the mob was hunting for foreigners to kill), and we watched Groppis, Egypt's smart Swiss-owned restaurant, go up in flames.

The crowd flowed down toward Qasr En Nil Street, a river of blue-and-white *gallabiyahs*, red tarbooshes, and cheap serge suits. Gangs of street urchins ran past us shouting "Kill them all! Kill them all!" A group of

young men pressed down the center of the road; some carried axes, one flourished a camel whip. Some of them were shouting in unison, "Search and find, search and find, search and find"; others swayed as though drunk, though certainly none of them had touched alcohol. Two of them looked over in our direction — their eyes were blood-shot, froth was dribbling from the corners of their mouths.

"That'll show the dogs," Hassan shouted at me, "the British dogs have been on our backs for too long." This was a different Hassan from the urbane, London-trained, *New Statesman*-reading lawyer I had known for the past dozen years, whose dislike of British power was matched by his respect for British institutions and his implicit hope that Egypt would one day be modeled on them.

We followed the crowd down into Qasr En Nil, where a large modern block of flats and offices was burning.

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*Army officers do not usually take a hand in social reforms. But today in Egypt they are doing just that, as captains of an odd and fascinating middle-class revolution. Mark Alexander, who contributed a "Letter from the Holy Land" to the August MERCURY, is a free-lance journalist who lives in the Middle East.*

"There you are, Hassan," I told him, "that's your own office burning down, so much for your revolt of the masses."

He laughed: "*Ma'aleish*, never mind, I'll find another office soon enough. Anyway," he added, breaking out into one of those enormous Egyptian smiles which lit up his whole face, "it's insured with a British firm, let the dogs pay."

THAT was "Black Saturday," January 26, 1952, when the mob burned down the center of Cairo, and over twenty Englishmen were killed — some thrown out of fifth-floor windows — and their bodies burned. It was the beginning of the end for Farouk, though few realized it at the time; the breakdown of political normality was in six months to bring the army to power, with Nagib, an unknown soldier, at its head.

The outbreak came as the climax of accumulated frustration and humiliation, caused only in part by the complete failure of the anti-British campaign in the Suez Canal Zone. The leaders of the Wafd, Egypt's most powerful party, feeling the need to restore their waning popularity, had thrown the Egyptians into a political and semimilitary struggle against the entrenched British, without any idea as to how it was all to end. Every one of the Wafd's new rivals took a hand in the anti-British movement, each out-

bidding the next. There was the fanatical Moslem Brotherhood, hating all Christians and Jews and looking backward to the lost "golden age"; the Communists and their fellow-travelers in the "peace movement"; Ahmed Hussein's "Socialist Party" (formerly Greenshirts), based on Mussolini's Fascist Party — each sought leadership of the anti-British campaign as preparation for their bid for power.

During the last months of 1951 the "liberations battalions" in the Canal Zone had met with utter defeat at the hands of the well-armed, disciplined British Tommies. When the *Nizam Baluk* (auxiliary police) began to help the terrorists, the British army took over control of towns, roads, and railways in the Zone, disarming the Egyptians. Finally they decided to disarm the *Nizam Baluk* in Ismailia, key city of the Canal Zone; the latter resisted and several were killed.

The following day units of the *Nizam Baluk* in Cairo mutinied and demonstrated against the British, the crowd joined in, and in a short time large sections of central Cairo lay in ruins. (The Communists later blamed it on British agents.)

The Wafd Minister of the Interior, millionaire Fuad Serag Ed Din Pasha, could have called in the army and quelled the riot without much difficulty, and in fact, when later in the day troops were brought in, they cleared the streets in a re-

markably short time. As luck would have it, however, Fuad Pasha was busily negotiating the purchase of real estate and had no time to spare for his police chiefs.

I SPENT that night in Hassan's roomy suburban flat — my hotel having been burned out — together with neighbors of his, also lawyers and dabblers in "social nationalism." As news of world reactions came pouring in over the radio and the first estimates of damage began to be made, I saw a different Hassan from the afternoon's carefree demonstrator. He sat holding his head in his hands, moaning, "What is going to happen to us all, what can we do?"

I suppose there were groups like ours sitting and discussing all over Egypt that night. "Things can't go on like this; something has got to be done," was the general consensus; but what? Farouk had to go, on that there seemed to be general agreement. His dissolute life was no secret, in spite of the government's attempts to prevent the Egyptian press from mentioning his escapades at home and in France, and to confiscate any foreign publications entering the country which referred to the way in which the King's private life had scandalized four continents.

The King's shabby treatment of his popular first wife, Farida, had brought him into disrepute with

the womenfolk, who came to see in her a symbol of their own desires for a better life and fairer treatment. The King divorced Farida and refused her permission to remarry or leave the country, or even to see her own children except for the briefest periods. Rather in the same way that Queen Caroline, ill-used wife of the profligate George IV, became the symbol of British opposition in the post-Napoleonic era, Farida had helped crystallize public opinion against Farouk.

I think it worth while stressing the essentially middle-class character of Nagib's revolution, and of the agitation which preceded it. On "Black Saturday," it is true, the Cairo mob was brought onto the stage for a few hours (as it had been in the 1946 rioting and during the riots of the twenties), but experience has always shown that these riots can take place only when the government is, for one reason or another, not prepared to put them down.

The fellah (peasant or rural laborer), the most numerous class in Egyptian society, and the most downtrodden, has, so far, been completely passive. Undernourished and overworked, illiterate, listless from parasitic diseases, he has remained outside of politics, while the feudal conditions of the countryside have kept him in mental as well as physical bondage. The pashas and beys, local police officers, officials, and priests all seemed far too grand and

knowledgeable, as well as too powerful, for the poor fellah to question.

In the towns it was scarcely different; the inhabitants of the human anthills surrounding the luxurious garden suburbs were mainly new arrivals from the village, their chief concern being to stay alive somehow. Only among the upper ten per cent of the urban working class, the regular factory workers in the rapidly growing textile and chemical industries, was real political activity and trade unionism to be found. There you discovered Moslem Brothers, Communists, Trotskyites, Ahmed Hussein's "socialists," and the "Egyptian Labor Party," hobby of millionaire Abd El Hamid, Abd El Haqq Pasha, Prince Abbas Halim, and General Aziz El Masri. None of these parties, however, has yet been successful in gaining regular support from labor. In the main, it was still to the middle class that all parties looked for their support, and after World War II they began to turn toward a hitherto neglected section of this class, the army officer corps.

Egypt's crushing defeat in Palestine had merely brought to the surface antagonisms which had been simmering in the army for a long time between the favored few and the rest. For the majority of the officers life was by no means easy. Promotion was slow, except for those coming from wealthy landowning families; pay was poor; while incompetence, favoritism, and corrup-

tion at the top caused continual frustration. Long before the Palestine debacle army officers complained to me about Egypt's political and social structure in a way that made it obvious that military intervention in politics was only a matter of time. They complained about the King's interference in promotion and appointments; the interference of the King's hangers-on, and even of his Italian barber, who was, with the Commander in Chief, Mohamed Heidar, his chief procurer. They complained about the bad supplies they received, of their pay which had failed to keep pace with the rise in prices, of Egypt's economic backwardness which held back its military development, of the poor physique of the recruits due to underfeeding and lack of medical attention.

Hassan had two cousins in the army. One, a captain serving on the general staff, was often to be found at the flat, in mufti; he used to take part in our political discussions and his views were indistinguishable from those of the rest: "This can't go on, something must be done," he echoed.

**J**ULY AND AUGUST are traditionally months when nothing ever happens in Cairo, it becomes much too hot even to lose one's temper, the court and government move to Alexandria to catch a few sea breezes, and the capital sleeps or stews, even

the flies and beggars staying off the streets. Yet from the moment I landed at Al Maza Airport early in August of this year I could sense a change in the atmosphere, could sense a tenseness, excitement, and optimism. People moved more briskly, as if they felt some purpose in day-to-day life. Hassan, instead of his usual white jacket and bow tie, was wearing the semimilitary suit of khaki drill which has suddenly become the fashion. The middle class, which failed during twenty bitter years to produce its own revolution, is grateful to the army, and has idolized Nagib, as well it might: he is a paragon of middle-class virtues, hardworking, sober, and economical to the point of puritanism, and a family man. He has surrounded himself with university men, lawyers, and intellectuals, and has "liquidated" the luxury-loving court and its hangers-on.

Hassan and his friends are even affecting the externals of the coup's puritanism by adopting a certain simplicity in meals and dress. The sticky sweets and cakes have left his table, also the bogus French wines which I suspect the Greek grocer who sold them of having brewed in his cellar, and which I found it such a strain to have to drink with a smile.

THE ARMY has won over the Egyptian middle classes (using the word in the broadest sense to mean all groups between the fellahin and

urban impoverished on the one hand, and the pashas and beys on the other) in a way which has to be experienced to be believed. It was able to do this in the first place because after Black Saturday every other force in the country was discredited, and the political vacuum could not remain unfilled forever. The Wafd, which for so many years had stood as the "people's champion" against the palace and the British, had become more and more of a great vested interest, sharing the spoils with Farouk and his hangers-on. The Moslem Brotherhood had shown more interest in closing down cabarets and night clubs than in evolving policies to deal with Egypt's complex social and diplomatic problems.

There has been considerable speculation as to whether Nagib had helped to prepare the coup, or had merely been called in at the last moment, and whether he foresaw where it would lead him. There is an element of naïveté in these speculations. In the first place Nagib is no simple barrack-room soldier, but a man who was graduated in social sciences and law, studying history, especially turbulent Middle Eastern history, seriously, with an eye to the parallels. Furthermore, when he accepted chairmanship of the now famous "Officers' Club" last March, he knew what he was doing; the challenge to Farouk was obvious to close observers at the time. When

Farouk decided to dissolve the club last May, he had the High Command order Nagib to Upper Egypt, several hundreds of miles away from the politically decisive Nile Delta. The officers decided that they could wait no longer.

Their tanks and armored cars concentrated in Cairo and Alexandria in the misty dawn of July 23. Three days later, Farouk was on the Royal Yacht *Makhroussa*, steaming to Naples, without a drop of blood having been spilled in his defense. Farouk inherited the kingdom with an impressive finality that has many parallels in Arabic history of previous centuries, but few in the twentieth century.

"Isn't Nagib asking too much, expecting the parties to carry out an honest purge?" Cairo was asking. This question, like preoccupation with whether the Communists or Moslem Brotherhood would not carry the revolution a stage further (parallels with 1917 in Russia sprang to peoples' minds) revealed a failure to grasp the special character of Middle Eastern revolutionary movements. Compared with their European equivalents, whether on the left or right, they seem hopelessly old-fashioned. Egypt's nationalists — "social-nationalists" would be a better term — have flirted with Communism, fascism, and Western democracy simultaneously, picking up methods, ideas, and tactics from all three, as suits their convenience;

but fundamentally they remain nationalists.

NAGIB'S MINISTER OF STATE, propaganda chief, and spokesman, Fathi Ridwan, whose ideas and personality have been evident in so many of the recent developments and who may be Egypt's next premier, is an excellent instance. Well-groomed, stocky, just turning to plumpness in his early forties, Fathi does not strike one at first as essentially Arab or Egyptian. He might just as well be French or Italian (in fact he knows both languages more or less perfectly).

In 1931, while still a law student at Cairo University, Fathi became secretary of the "Middle East Students' Executive League," an impressive-sounding name even if the League lacked clear aims or activities. It allowed him to travel inside the country and abroad, to address meetings, and to express his resentment against British wealth, power, and aloofness, and against the immobility of Egyptian society, with notables and political leaders holding on to their power till the day they died. For so many talented young men of his generation it seemed hardly worth while to study and work hard for years when their labors might bear no fruit; so they looked for some quicker way of reaching power.

In 1933 Fathi worked on the abortive scheme to industrialize

Egyptian by piastre (five cents) contributions from the public and then in 1934 became General Secretary of Ahmed Hussein's "Young Egypt," hoping that the rise of fascism, which the movement aped, and the defeat of Britain would give "Young Egypt" a chance to push out the elderly and influential and introduce its own burning, yet still rather vague, ideas.

During the next seven years he was brought to court six times for his political activity, escaping each time with an acquittal or fine. In 1941, when Rommel's Afrika Korps threatened Egypt, he was arrested and interned as a fascist sympathizer, together with Ali Maher, who later became Nagib's chief collaborator and was then discarded.

Released in 1944, he joined the Nationalist Party, which now provides two of Nagib's ministers, and soon became secretary general. Fathi might easily have joined the Wafd, where younger men were trying to make themselves heard. But instead he chose the virtually moribund Nationalist Party, where he could move straight to a position of importance.

By then he had lost interest in fascism, whose appeal had diminished after its defeat at Allied hands. When I first met him in 1949 he was already vice president of the pro-Soviet "Partisans of Peace," for whom he attended a conference in Vienna in 1951, making speeches

and being fêted. The Peace Partisans, the most successful front the Communists have yet established in the Middle East, suited the nationalists just as well as their former Axis affiliations: it denounced British imperialism; invited them to international conferences, paying all their expenses; and gave them the feeling of being linked with the surging world proletariat and colonial peoples, and with the powerful Soviet empire.

Their president, Kamil Bindari, better known as the "Red Pasha," a rich landowner and political dilettante, had been Egyptian Minister to Moscow during the war, and like the American Ambassador, Joseph E. Davies, had been impressed by what he was allowed to see. Yet within a few days after the Nagib's coup Kamil Bindari, together with almost all of Egypt's fellow-travelers, had rallied to Nagib, leaving the Communists, who denounce Nagib, out on a limb — "objectively in the camp of the reactionary feudal landowners," to use Red jargon.

Fathi's evolution in recent months explains a lot about Middle Eastern politics. In the winter of 1951-52, at the time of the anti-British struggle, he seemed to be turning daily more radical, and never printed a word which would have earned the disapproval of Moscow. Yet on July 27, 1952, a bare day and a half after Nagib had released him from a concentration camp where he had been



held since "Black Saturday," he was given an audience with Ali Maher and Nagib. And shortly afterwards, Fathi, as Minister of State, announced that the land reform's aim was to create satisfied smallholders who would be Egypt's surest bulwark against Communism.

THE KEY to this rapid change in outlook, which is not confined to one individual but has affected nearly all Egypt's middle classes, is to be found in the nature of "social nationalism," and the marked inferiority feelings which hampered Fathi's generation. Last year, when we were chiding Fathi for his rapid swings in ideology and his predilection for heady foreign doctrines, he answered quite frankly that he would try any ideas which he thought might help Egypt, whether Communist, capitalist, fascist, or socialist.

"The Westerners would like to limit us to a far narrower range of methods than they themselves have been ready to use," he complained. We were sitting in a Cairo sidewalk café, on a street crowded with a mixture of types inconceivably more varied than could ever be found in Europe — dandies in sharkskin suits, brown-and-white shoes, and enormous sun glasses, passed their ragged barefooted fellow-citizens, veiled women in heavy black robes, white-collar workers in their shiny frayed blue serge suits, and young students

dawdling along, scornfully dismissing the British, the Americans, the government, and virtually the whole world, with evident self-satisfaction.

In and out of the café wove a succession of bootblacks, newspaper boys, vendors of peanuts, pistachios, sun glasses, cigarettes, maps, fly-swatters, any odds and ends they could think of, combining impotency and apprehension, each struggling to keep alive till the next day, when something might happen, if Allah willed. Along the center of the road, battered and crowded Belgian trams clanged, somehow clearing a path through the donkeys, camels, carts, and pedestrians who pushed along in the hot dusty air, all bearing witness to Egypt's great gift, fertility.

Hassan, who specialized in knowing everybody and talking in cafés as his contribution to Egypt's social salvation, waved his hand at the whole scene, and at the dilapidated houses across the street looking as though they were likely to tumble down at any moment. "This is what we got from the British. They came along and occupied our country by force, used political police, executions, prisons, and corruption; and then they lecture us on democracy and regard for treaty rights. We'll have our own kind of democracy all in good time, when we've managed to get rid of the British and feed these poor devils." Fathi nodded approvingly, and added that for East-

erners, Communism is something quite different from what it is for the West.

In Europe Communism still has the attraction of a new idea, whereas to Fathi and his generation it is already one of the many used European fashions offered at cut prices, for them to pick pieces out of and throw the rest away. It is this very closeness of the "social nationalists" to Communism and their mastery of Leninist tactics which have damped Russia's hopes of gaining a foothold here. The nationalists can beat the hard-core Communists at their own game, as they have done in French North Africa, infiltrating their movements, using their press and international connections, and then throwing them over as soon as they feel strong enough.

The last stage in the evolution of Nagib's Egypt hasn't been reached yet. The characteristic of his movement has been its ability to move in stages, following the logic of events: first, the officers' group, demanding reforms in the army and an end to public scandals; then the coup of July 23, giving supreme military power into the hands of the officers and then exiling the King; then governing together with the respectable conservative politician, Ali Maher. Only when the officers' group and their civilian advisers, Fathi and such people, felt their hold over the administration and public imagination to be strong enough,

and after they had shown Communists, Wafd, and Moslem Brothers alike that they meant business, did they pounce on the political leaders, rid themselves of Ali Maher, and proceed with the land reforms. Only then was the stage set for settling accounts with the Moslem Brotherhood, which has been waiting undecided in the wings, and with Wafd leader Nahas, who still hoped to make a comeback.

WELL, Hassan" I asked, "and what when the novelty wears off?"

Hassan, in his semi-battle dress, his tarboosh replaced by a peaked military cap, was preparing to go to Upper Egypt as member of the land reform commission. There can be no mistake that in this law, far more than in the arrests and in the abolition of titles, Nagib is striking a blow at the very roots of Egypt's status quo. All landed properties of over 200 acres are to be taken over in the next five years and sold on easy terms to the landless peasants. The handful of pashas and beys, who between them hold 2,000,000 acres of Egypt's fertile irrigated lands, will lose their basis of power; Nagib has expressed the hope that the money they receive in compensation will go toward developing Egyptian industry, but that is up to them. Fellahin who own less than five acres will have to join co-operatives, membership in which will be voluntary for

those fortunate owners of more than five acres. A central bank has been set up to help poor peasants and landless laborers (of whom there are a million) to buy land and to improve their methods and living standards.

"Obviously, it will take time," Hassan answered; "we can't right the wrongs and neglect of centuries overnight, but we're on the right road at last."

This was a different Hassan indeed. Nagib's movement — and this remains one of its most impressive achievements — somehow seems to have dispelled, at least temporarily, that characteristic combination of impatience, petulance, and despair which had hamstrung earlier reform movements here, however promising they were at their inception.

Still, Nagib has a long way to go yet, and much of his final success may depend on the way in which the West treats him. One thing remains certain, there is no likelihood of his regime being overturned in the near future from inside. Even if his enemies in the Wafd or Moslem Brotherhood were willing and able to assassinate him, they would gain nothing, since there is a whole committee of officers behind him, all sharing basically similar ideas. Next in succession is the army's representative on the regency council, debonair and aristocratic Colonel Mohammed Rashid Mehannah. The Colonel is reminiscent of an English

eighteenth-century Whig: he was born rich enough to be contemptuous of greed and corruption, and has a genuine feeling of *noblesse oblige*, sympathy for the underdog, and belief in the urgent need for progress. Mehannah sees rural poverty, which has caused the drift from the land into the overcrowded towns, as the country's great festering sore. "Our peasant is living and working in 1952 A.D. as he did in 1952 B.C. Our job is to change this," was his comment on the reforms.

The Communists, who appeared formidable so long as Farouk and the pashas ruled, have had their thunder stolen so completely that they are at a loss what to do next. I have seen a couple of their underground leaflets, and a semilegal front weekly. They have little to express except professional jealousy and crude nationalism.

NAGIB's biggest enemy is the poverty and ignorance in which the majority of his countrymen are steeped. His efforts, however well directed, to raise the subhuman living standards of Egypt's masses, to fill their bellies, give them clean water to drink and houses (or even huts with doors and windows) to live in, will take many long years to bear fruit.

The land reform, in itself, will actually reduce Egypt's disposable surplus of agricultural products in the immediate future, since the new

smallholders, freed from crushing rent payments, will consume more of their own produce. The government has also decided to cut down acreages planted to cotton, Egypt's main export, to thirty percent of the total acreage, in order to step up food production. A large part of the country's income will have to go for new investment in factories, roads, and bridges, schools, agricultural colleges, and research stations; new land will have to be reclaimed from the desert, irrigated, and put under cultivation. The peasant will have to be given medical treatment and better food, in order to stamp out diseases like malaria and bilharzia which cut down his strength and working capacity.

The will is there, but can it be kept up for years till real results begin to show? Will Hassan and his friends, the dilettante politicians and officers, not slip back into their old ways, with resulting intrigues and corruption? Will Nagib avoid the temptation of militarist adventures as a cheap way of keeping popular support? There are too many factors involved to make it possible to forecast the outcome, the only thing one can say with certainty is that things can never be as they were before July 23. The fellah has been given rights he will never relinquish, the pashas and palace have been toppled from their eminence, and the middle classes have at last come into their own.

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### ***Egypt's Sophistication***

» The two features of isolation and semi-urban population combine to make Egypt different from her neighbours. At the present day the Arabs of Palestine and of Iraq concede the general cultural leadership of Egypt, as being the most sophisticated of the Arab countries; and yet they do not feel that the Egyptians are truly Arabs. The Egyptians are not subject to the great conservative control of the Arabian Desert. The deserts adjacent to Palestine and Iraq are potential breeding-grounds for fierce and puritanical elements in the populations of those countries. Egypt, with her agricultural wealth and with her people lying check by jowl, developed an early sophistication, which expressed itself intellectually in tendencies toward catholicity and syncretism. Within Egypt the most divergent concepts were tolerantly accepted and woven together into what we moderns might regard as a clashing philosophical lack of system. . . . The way of the Egyptian was to accept innovations and to incorporate them into his thought, without discarding the old and outmoded.

JOHN A. WILSON, *in THE INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE OF ANCIENT MANKIND*, University of Chicago Press, 1946.



# Frederick Vanderbilt Field

## FROM RICHES TO REDS

*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. — Matthew 19: 24.*

ONE NIGHT, about twenty-five hundred years ago, a young Indian prince by the name of Gautama Buddha gave up his wealth and worldly position, cut off his long black hair, and, in beggar's clothes, set out to seek Nirvana and Divine Enlightenment.

In 1928, an American capitalist prince also forsook his heritage and spent fifty cents for a bright red Socialist Party membership card. Frederick Vanderbilt Field was looking for Divine Enlightenment down a rough and rutted road that led to Communism. As he proudly explained it to reporters: "In psychological terms, I am heading toward as perfect a completion of my de-

sires, instincts and impulses as possible." A truly amazing statement for a young man born to the Vanderbilt purple. However, with befitting modesty, Field hastened to add: "I am told by everyone I meet that one is a socialist until one is thirty, and then becomes a liberal, and at forty one finds oneself a conservative. I'm not at all sure that I won't outgrow it, but I am absolutely dead certain it's not a stunt."

Today, at the age of forty-seven, Field has outgrown nothing. His thin brown hair may have receded somewhat, giving his high forehead a more mountainous appearance. His boyish smile may come less easily now, and his eyes — peering shortsightedly through shell-rimmed glasses — may occasionally look harassed. But otherwise, Field seems unchanged. As a full-fledged member of the Communist hierarchy in America, he is still following the gleam he saw in his twenty-third year. By the handy Communist

*Julian Maxwell, a working journalist from Ohio and occasional society reporter, has for some time been fascinated by upper-class political slumming.*

technique of “doublethink,” he is apparently able to reconcile his “idealism” with the depravity of totalitarian power politics — although “reconcile” is really the wrong word for describing that peculiar “controlled schizophrenia” (Klaus Fuchs’ term) which permits Communists to act like devils and feel like saints. From his dingy, pamphlet-littered office at 26 East Twenty-third Street in New York City, he helps broadcast a vituperative propaganda that sounds like the ravings of a paranoid.

THE WORLD, as seen through the red-tinted lens of the Field telescope, is a strange and terrifying place. Through the lens, the American government appears as a gigantic conspiracy aimed at the extermination of minority groups at home, and the exploitation and military conquest of nations and peoples abroad. Korea is an American “crime,” and the Communist charges of germ warfare and genocide against this country are “truth.” It is a peculiar world where Russia is always right and the United States is always wrong — by definition. The only “great democracies” are the Soviet government and the Chinese Communist government of Mao Tse-tung; and the only hope for the United States is that it will someday go Communist, too. But Field has no doubts about this. All about him, he sees the tall sky-

scrapers of capitalism crumbling, and he knows it will be only a matter of time until the final collapse.

As all former Communists attest, though Communism denies religion, it is accepted as a faith. Once this faith has been established, the Communist no longer concerns himself with reality. The party is the absolute; whatever it says or does is automatically right until something manages to shake the faith. And when the psychological need for believing is strong enough, nothing can shake it. Arthur Koestler, writing in *The God That Failed*, gives a vivid picture of his conversion to Communism: “The new light seems to pour from all directions across the skull; the whole universe falls into a pattern like the stray pieces of a jigsaw puzzle assembled by magic all at one stroke. There is now an answer to every question, doubts and conflicts are a matter of the tortured past — a past already remote, when one had lived in dismal ignorance, in the tasteless, colorless world of those who don’t know. Nothing henceforth can disturb the convert’s inner peace and serenity — except the occasional fear of losing faith again, losing thereby what all along makes life worth living, and falling back into the outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Since the end of World War I, literally thousands of America’s wealthy either have embraced Com-

munism outright, or else flirted with it as fellow-travelers and supporters of Communist front organizations. Among them are such men as Corliss Lamont, the son of the J. P. Morgan banker, who led Field into the party, and Charles Garland. Field is merely one of the more vivid examples of a special phenomenon of our time.

FREDERICK VANDERBILT FIELD was born on April 14, 1905, toward the end of an era described by Dr. David Bryn-Jones as basking in the "sunset glow of Victorian optimism." His father was William Bradhurst Osgood Field, a descendant of Samuel Osgood, the country's first Postmaster General. His mother was Lila Vanderbilt Sloane, granddaughter of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, the legendary "robber baron" of the railroads. Field was born into a golden world of untroubled ease and good manners that seemed as if it would go on forever. Yet the dark forces that were to plunge the world into two tremendous wars, overturn dozens of governments, and raise the banner of Communism on earth, were quietly at work along the neatly clipped hedges and in the airy nurseries of the Field estate, even then influencing the burgeoning consciousnesses of the Fields' children, Marjorie, Mary, William, and "Freddie."

The effect of their own good for-

tune, in a world of trouble and unrest, was to implant in some of the sons of the wealthy a powerful sense of guilt. Out of a desire for self-punishment, they turned against their fathers' houses. They would, if necessary, sacrifice fortune, honor, and sometimes even their lives and the lives of others in their need for self-immolation. And the ironic part of it all was that in finding this new "idealism" they became part of conspiracy whose ruthlessness and moral depravity would have made a robber baron blush for shame.

Thus was spawned the wealthy left-wing radical of the twentieth century. Like his counterparts in previous history, he denied self-interest as his primary motive and set a course by the stars of virtue and self-judgment. Like such men as Robert Owen and William Willberforce, his goal was the improvement of the lot of the masses. But unlike these predecessors, he was unable to seek fulfilment of these aims within the boundaries of his own society. He could love only foreign countries (i.e., Russia and China). He could identify himself only with those outside his own social class, laborers and peasants. Wherever he looked, he could find rightness and goodness only where he was not. In another age, he might conceivably have become a monk or a criminal. But in this age there was another solace for him, whose emblem was the sickle and hammer.

In 1923 (the year "Freddie" Field entered Harvard), a young millionaire set the stage for future events by turning over his entire fortune to the service of left-wing causes. Charles Garland told newsmen: "I believe that every person is an integral part of society, and that the interests of one individual cannot be divorced from the interests of the other members of society without all having to pay for it in the end." A few miles away, at Cambridge, young Freddie had not yet caught the fatal fever. In fact, it appeared to all who knew him that he would probably never catch it. He joined all the right clubs, met all the right people, and quickly gained a reputation as a sprinter in the social swim. He was all that a Harvard man of that period was expected to be. But not for long.

It soon became apparent to Field's family and friends that something was bothering him. He expressed a horror of living the life of "the idle rich" and began delving into the theories R. H. Tawney outlined in *The Acquisitive Society*. This book hit Field in the emotional solar plexus. Said Tawney: "It [society] must persuade its members to renounce the opportunity of gains without service." But he also added: "If a man has important work and leisure and income to enable him to do it properly, he is in possession of as much happiness as is good for any of the children of Adam."

Field subsequently went to Europe, soaked up some socialism, returned, married Ruth Brown, a poor girl from Duluth, and got a job as secretary to the Institute of Pacific Relations, a non-profit organization for the study of Asia which later, under his guidance, became a front for Communists. There were a number of reasons why the I.P.R. was particularly suited to Field's needs. But perhaps the most outstanding was that it enabled him to fulfil the pattern of renunciation, and, at the same time, satisfy his emotional cravings. The rice paddies of China were a long way from his family's estate in the Berkshires, and Field took to them like a duck to water. He studied every book on Asia he could get his hands on, and wrote a couple of books himself. He poured thousands of dollars into the organization, and made trips to Russia and the Far East under its auspices.

FIELD was cut loose and drifting now as the depression washed over him and all America like a great tidal wave; it picked him up and carried him onward to the shore toward which he had been moving for so long, but which up to now had only been dimly seen. As he plunged headlong into the abyss, the wildest suspicions of his youthful college days were confirmed. The capitalistic economy, which Field hated as much as he hated himself,



seemed to be coming apart at the seams. His beliefs were no longer a case to be argued in a classroom, they were battle cries and banners. Field at last became a Communist.

From this point on he steered a clear course. His renunciation of his old way of life (except for his membership in the Harvard and Century clubs in New York) was complete. For the next twenty years, he worked unceasingly for the cause of Communism, both at home and abroad. According to Louis Budenz, he headed a Red cell in the I.P.R., worked hand-in-glove with Owen Lattimore, and served as an agent for Communist China in this country. He also wrote dozens of articles on the Far East for the *New Masses* and *Daily Worker*. By 1949, he was writing in the Communist theoretical publication, *Political Affairs*, handing down the party line on Far Eastern questions.

The most outstanding thing about Field's writings over the years is its sameness; if you have read one article, you have read them all. Through a decade of depression, war, peace, and cold war, Field's muse reflected only the pure light of Moscow policy. This was perhaps because Field was determined never to fall back into that "outer darkness" Koestler talks about. He had sacrificed his reason to blind faith, and he was bound to keep that faith at all costs: it was the cement that held his whole personality and life

together. Though he could change wives three times, he could never give up his Red Mistress. Field is what Edmund Bergler calls, in his book *Money and Emotional Conflicts*, an "ideological dependee." More simply, as Dr. Bella Dodd, a former Communist friend of his puts it: "Freddie is basically maladjusted."

In Field's writing, his favorite word is "imperialist" or "imperialism." In one short article, he used it twenty-seven times. Some typical Fieldisms: April 16, 1946, in the *New Masses*: "The Communist Party of the United States plays an important role in giving leadership, fibre and militancy to the organized forces of democracy." February 4, 1947: "The diplomatic efforts of the Soviet Union . . . have served as a powerful force holding in check the worst failures of American imperialism." And finally, on September 10, 1946, in *New Masses*, a bit of philosophical summing up: "Imperialism is a definite historical stage in the development of capitalism — the last stage, the stage of which fascism is but one aspect. Imperialism is the particular organization of productive forces of capitalist society by monopolies and cartels." But the Communists could get anybody to turn out this sort of stuff. Field's real contribution to American Communism, like the contributions of so many others of his class, was made in terms of hard cash.

The first so-called "angel" of Bolshevism was a Mrs. Kalmykova, a Russian aristocrat who supplied funds to a front organization of Lenin's. In the Communist underground of the pre-1917 days, she was referred to as "Auntie" in the code system; because of her ability as a money-raiser "Auntie" was also called "the bucket."

Frederick Vanderbilt Field is both the uncle and the "bucket" of American Communism. Considering that more than fifty per cent of the party's operating funds come from contributions, this is no mean distinction. Over the years, Field has collected and contributed hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars for the cause. In fact, you might say he keeps Communism in business in America. It was Field's money which helped found and support *Amerasia*, the magazine in whose headquarters the F. B. I. found secret State Department documents. It was Field's money and collecting talents which established a 56-thousand-dollar American People's Fund in 1942. And it was Field who organized the bail fund of the Civil Rights Congress, which put up over half a million dollars in bail over a two-year period. (Last year, when Field refused to reveal the source of bond for four Communist leaders, he received a ninety-day jail sentence for contempt of court, of which he served three days, and won a round of publicity in the

nation's newspapers and magazines). Today, Field's money continues to support the propagandizing activities of the Civil Rights Congress and a raft of other organizations all housed in Field's three-story building in New York City.

**B**UT THOUGH Field is probably one of the most useful tools of the Kremlin in America, in person he remains still the capitalist prince. Seeing him by chance walking down Fifth Avenue at five o'clock in the afternoon, we might mistake him for a stock broker going home from work. Meeting him at a social gathering, one finds him "intellectual-looking," quick-witted, courteous and friendly. The core may be rotten, but the Vanderbilt-Harvard shell remains untarnished. And there is little now that anyone, even Field, can do about it. Field is the product of history and his own weakness. He is one of the "hollow men" marching dumbly down a dark street to the beat of a distant drum.

Thinking of all the wealthy young men who flirted with Communism during the past quarter century, we are reminded of that famous limerick recited by Federal Judge Alan Goldsborough to Field, when he was facing contempt charges:

*There was a young lady from Niger,  
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.  
They returned from the ride  
With the lady inside,  
And the smile on the face of the tiger.*

## WHAT IS

# 'Guilt by Association'?

### *Clarifying a Catchphrase*

FROM TIME TO TIME certain phrases catch the public fancy. They get fixed in popular consciousness and enjoy a vogue both in the academy and market place. Repetition gives them a patina of familiarity so that their use soothes the understanding instead of challenging it. Gradually these phrases begin to be employed in all sorts of contexts until they function not as summaries of thought, but as substitutes, like flags run up to show the color of our emotions.

Such a phrase is "guilt by association." In view of the President's directive to the Civil Service Commission to review and unify the discordant procedures in existing loyalty and security programs, its analysis is no mere theoretical exercise.

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Men's liberties, reputation, and livelihood may depend upon the proper interpretation of this expression.

The origin of the phrase is obscure but its current use almost universal. It appears even in Supreme Court decisions, with a minority charging in a vigorous dissent that a certain piece of legislation (the Feinberg Law) commits our society to a belief in the pernicious doctrine of "guilt by association," whereas the majority holds that there is nothing pernicious in the principle behind the practices so vehemently denounced by their fellow-justices.

Even long before the phrase "guilt by association" appeared in a dissenting opinion of the Supreme Court, it had been used in many quarters to hamper exposure and criticism of Communist Party activities. It has been argued that nothing can be legitimately inferred about an individual's qualifications for any post from the fact that he is a mem-

ber of the Communist Party. To make any such inference, we often hear, is to lapse into the horrible sin of attributing "guilt by association" and to betray the heritage of American freedom. The very same person who recognizes that under certain circumstances membership in the Society of Friends, Ethical Culture, and similar groups may be relevant in favorably assessing individual worth or qualifications for a position, will passionately deny that membership in a conspiratorial party, whose control commission rigorously excludes inactive people or dissenters, is ever relevant in making an unfavorable assessment! In effect such a person, while believing in "innocence by association" or "fitness by association," disbelieves in "guilt by association" or "unfitness by association." Yet these expressions are on all fours in their ambiguity.

In the whole discussion of the tangled questions of national security, professional integrity, and personal freedom, now raging throughout the country, "guilt by association" is the most overworked phrase in circulation. Even an organization with such a long and honorable history as the American Association of University Professors has invoked the phrase, as a protective mantle, around the right of members of the Communist Party to teach in our colleges and universities on the same terms as any other individuals. The

Academic Freedom Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union has similarly denounced those who would exclude members of the Communist Party from colleges on grounds of professional unfitness as having fallen victim to the diseased thinking that guilt can be evidenced by association. The Public Affairs Committee in its pamphlet, *Loyalty in a Democracy*, has an entire section devoted to "guilt by association," and throughout the discussion the most horrendous consequences are attributed to judgments based on it.

Nowhere, however, has an extended analysis of the expression, "guilt by association," been made in order to determine its different meanings and to distinguish between its legitimate and illegitimate uses and applications. Until this is done not only may our practices be unjust and illiberal but our counsels are likely to be confused in devising intelligent safeguards against Communist penetration.

THE MEANING of the phrase "guilt by association" is ambiguous because of the ambiguity of the key terms "guilt" and "association." There is *criminal* guilt which makes a man subject to penal sanctions — fines, loss of his liberty, and, in extreme cases, even of his life. There is *moral* guilt which is not legally punishable but which may incur, in addition to a judgment of blame and disapproval, certain social sanc-

tions from the community. Except to those who regard the particular laws that are being violated as unjust, criminal guilt usually carries with it the stigma of moral guilt. Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence recognizes criminal guilt by association only in certain cases of conspiracy.

The kind of situation in which the phrase "guilt by association" is most frequently applied is one in which moral guilt is involved. The question arises over the degree and justification of the sanctions the community adopts toward those who are presumably guilty. Some cases present no difficulties. A candidate for a judicial post is shown to be an intimate associate of racketeers and gangsters. No one asserts his criminal guilt. But certainly those responsible for his election or selection would feel justified in denying him office. And judging by his efforts to exonerate himself from the charge, where corruption is not rife, the candidate acts as if he, too, believes that his associations with others are relevant in considering his qualifications.

Common sense and common practice, reflected in such expressions as "a man is judged by the company he keeps," "birds of a feather," etc., recognize the wisdom of appraising certain kinds of association in considering the fitness of an individual to fill positions requiring public confidence. A crony of notorious gamblers is not likely to be

considered for the post of bank teller even if it is demonstrable that all he does is to hold their money belt or bank their money. He would be eligible to drive a dump truck but hardly an armored money truck.

SUPPOSE, however, a judge already holding office associates with disreputable elements in the community. What action of reprisal, if any, would the community be justified in taking, even if there were no evidence of *criminal* guilt? This question underscores the ambiguity of the term "association." For the answer is indeterminate until we know what kind of association exists between him and them, and for what purposes. "Association" is a generic word for the most diverse kinds of relationships among men, A. O. Lovejoy points out in a brilliant note, ranging from active co-operation through membership in an organization, to chance meetings and other innocuous contacts, to continuous encounters for purposes of debate and refutation. For example, a man joins the Communist Party, and by virtue of his membership actively co-operates in subverting the purposes of the institution in which the Communist Party is secretly functioning. A second man joins a co-operative or a trade union which Communists subsequently join or capture. A third man, perhaps a minister seeking to save lost souls, frequents Communist

meetings in order to argue with and against Communists. All three relationships are forms of associations, but moral guilt is present only in the first case. In the other two cases the association is perfectly innocent and sometimes commendable. Most of the tearful effects produced by the charge that a conspirator is being made a victim of the doctrine of "guilt by association" consists in transferring the connotations that the phrase has in the second and third contexts to the first.

WITH THESE preliminary distinctions in mind, some light may be thrown on the question whether inferences based on an individual's continued membership in the Communist Party constitutes unreasonable imputation of criminal or moral "guilt by association." The American legal tradition holds that all guilt is personal. That this is not violated by the provisions of the Smith Act, which forbids the advocacy of the overthrow of government by force or violence, must be recognized even by those who have their doubts about its wisdom, or who would have preferred to see the leaders of the Communist Party charged with failure to register as foreign agents. For one thing, an act of membership is personal. But more important, no member of the Communist Party has so far been legally punished, or held criminally guilty, on grounds of his member-

ship alone. In each case the government has sought to prove that by some specific act or deed, involved in an advocacy which is part of the process of preparation, the defendant in question has been guilty of planning the violent overthrow of democratic government.

Much more controversial is the question whether in barring members of the Communist Party from public employment, federal or local, we are invoking the principle of "guilt by association" in an objectionable way. It is at this point that many confuse "criminal guilt" with "moral guilt." If a member of the Communist Party is kept out of an atomic weapons plant or any other strategic or policy-making post, he is not being charged with "criminal guilt by association" because some other members of the Communist Party have been guilty of espionage. His guilt is *moral*, and it is personal. Nor is he being charged with mere association of the innocuous variety previously mentioned, but with an *act* of membership in an organization whose structure, discipline, and controls make it impossible for any person to remain in it without actively co-operating in the achievement of its purposes. Since these purposes are conspiratorial, there is every justification in considering his act of membership as directly relevant to his professional qualifications.

Whatever may have been the

case in the past, a man does not today somnambulistically stumble into the Communist Party. If he remains a member, this is *prima facie* evidence that he is a hardened conspirator and that he accepts its orders and directives. If ever an individual were found who had joined and remained a member of the Communist Party under the impression that it was merely a branch, say, of a Temperance Union or a Benevolent Association for Diffusing Joy Among the Sexes, he would be ineligible on grounds of lack of intelligence for any responsible job.

The situation is quite different, however, with membership in "front" organizations or those listed as "subversive" by the Attorney General, other than the Communist Party and similar conspiratorial political groups of fascist hue. We are assuming for purposes of this analyses that such groups have been correctly identified and the procedures by which this has been done are both public and subject to judicial review.

Since the actual purposes of some of these organizations have been carefully disguised, many well-meaning people have at one time or another been taken in. To infer from the act of membership in *such* organizations, the moral guilt of co-operation in achieving the ulterior ends of the Communist Party "fraction" operating behind the scenes, may be a sad mistake. It is

here that some grave injustices have been done to individuals by denying them access to responsible posts because unscrupulous groups capitalized on their idealism or naïveté. As a rule it is in situations of this type that the phrase about avoiding "guilt by association" may be legitimately used in warning or pleading against lumping together the sheep and the goats.

NO SINGLE FORMULA can be a guide to intelligent decision in such situations, but only tested knowledge acquired in long and close study of front organizations, Communist ideology, and the turns and zigzags in the strategy and tactics of the Kremlin's war against the West. A blameless life as an investment broker or as a minister of the gospel, even a brilliant career as a corporation lawyer or in the military services, does not of itself qualify a man as an expert in this field. Since literally hundreds of thousands have unwittingly or wittingly passed through Communist fronts, and since the number of sensitive positions in government and industry increases daily, great care must be exercised lest in the interests of security, we are needlessly committing individual injustices.

It cannot be too much emphasized that the problem is not to determine the presence or degree of criminal guilt involved by membership in

"subversive groups," but the presence and degree of risk involved in employing in strategic posts those who hold, or who have held, such membership. The technical task of detecting actual espionage agents or saboteurs must be left to special agencies.

IN JUDGING the significance of an individual's membership in a subversive organization, the following are some of the more important considerations:

(1) The number of such organizations he is a member of. A man may be fooled once, twice, or even three times. But beyond a certain point we are justified in concluding that he is a willing fool, not criminally guilty of anything, but morally obtuse in lending his name, prestige, and sometimes substantial means for exploitation by the enemies of freedom.

(2) The degree and character of activity in such organizations. Was he merely a name on a letterhead or a member of the executive committee where the Communist Party fraction usually shows its hand?

(3) The time and place of such activity. Most Communist "fronts" have been fathered by the party. Others have been captured or kidnapped from original organizers who were anything but Communists. Some individuals who have struggled to prevent capture remain to continue the struggle until excluded.

It is ironical that even some anti-Communists have been considered poor loyalty and security risks because of membership in an organization, originally non-Communist, but subsequently captured. In some places a local group, free of Communist Party taint, will affiliate with a national organization with high-sounding aims and name, without realizing that it is a front.

(4) Most important of all is the extent of the open co-operation between the front organization and the Communist Party. Any member of the International Labor Defense, the former legal defense arm of the Communist Party, which used to attack in unbridled fashion the American Civil Liberties Union for its defense of the civil liberties of all political groups, could hardly have failed to be aware of its character. On the other hand, in the late thirties a member of the American League Against War and Fascism might very well have been ignorant of the fact that it was a Communist Party front organization even though it was organized, according to well-authenticated public testimony, by Urevitch, a Comintern agent, in the swank apartment of A. A. Heller, sugar daddy of many Communist Party fronts. Since the usefulness of a front organization to the Communist Party depends upon its not being publicly identified as a front, whenever such organizations are exposed they are often killed and new

ones set up in their place. This has been especially true among Communist youth front organizations which are the most important single source from which the Communist Party recruits its most devoted cadres.

These various factors cannot be weighed mechanically. Each individual case must be considered in the light of general principles and its specific aspects. Allowance must also be made for the climate of opinion in the years when the struggle against Hitler seemed the all-absorbing task. These were the days when generous hopes ran high — a tribute to the trustfulness and goodwill of so many Americans — that the Kremlin would cultivate its own garden instead of embarking upon a program of world conquest.

DESPITE REPORTS to the contrary abroad, the United States is still a country in which public opinion is largely molded by voluntary associations of private citizens. These associations also perform invaluable

public services on a national, and especially local levels. Whether in the cause of peace or social welfare or education, civil liberties, and national defense, the overwhelming majority of these organizations have never found it necessary to join forces with totalitarians of any stripe, with bigots, and cultural vigilantes. No program to safeguard American democracy can be anything but self-defeating which discourages the existence and multiplication of such voluntary associations. We must not permit the existence of disingenuous front organizations to interfere with the continuous fight for good causes — whether popular or unpopular. Unless we fight for them, not only when the popular current is with us but when the going is rough and hard, good causes become lost causes. Communism on a global scale is the main danger, but there are plenty of evils on our own doorstep whose solution will make it easier to face and conquer the greatest threat to free institutions since the days of Salamis and Marathon.

Pearson's Patriot

» I am going to reveal the name of the man Senator McCarthy has designated the top Communist agent in the United States. The man is Owen Lattimore. Now I happen to know Owen Lattimore personally, and I only wish this country had more patriots like him.

DREW PEARSON, in a broadcast, March, 26, 1950.

» Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

KING HENRY IV, *Part I*.

Do You Know —

— that during the past five years Canada has reduced its tax load four separate times while maintaining a balanced budget; that the United States has doubled its tax load during the same period and still has an unbalanced budget; and that Canada has no excess profits tax and no capital gains tax?

ROSCOE DEXTER,
TORONTO, ONTARIO

— that in 1951 thirty-six of our forty-eight states spent more than they collected in taxes?

MRS. JACOB BRONSTEIN,
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

— that if the entire income of the 885,510 Americans who last year received as much as \$12,000 were confiscated, the amount would not be enough to support the federal government's spending for ten weeks?

JOHN S. MCINTYRE,
OLATHE, KANSAS.

— that all our military movements in Korea, all the directives to our troops, must first be cleared through Constantine Zinchenko, of the United Nations Secretariat; and that Zinchenko is a Russian citizen, as was his predecessor, Arkady Sobolev, his official position being Minister of War, Communication and Information of the UN — an office which the Russians demanded for themselves when the UN was set up?

DEVIN A. GARRITY,
RYE, NEW YORK

— that certain members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have advised our government to give the secrets of our new tactical atomic weapons to "certain of our allies," yet these secrets are more important than those stolen by Fuchs and Pontecorvo?

WILLIAM F. HEIMLICH,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

— that the United States sent 2.2 pounds of uranium to Russia under Lend-Lease when our entire supply of the rare atomic metal was only 4.5 pounds?

H. ROY MOSNAT,
BELLE PLAINE, IOWA.

In this space each month the MERCURY will publish what we judge to be the most important *facts* submitted by our readers. These must be facts, not opinions. Elsewhere we publish readers' opinions as well as our own. We invite the submission of such facts and will pay \$5 for each one published. Each submission should carry the notice "Facts" and should be accompanied by an authoritative reference. Unfortunately, we are not able to acknowledge or return submitted material.



Roedgroed, Snaps, and Smoerrebroed

SVEN LOLLIK

GABY," I said, "what about Denmark?" She had never been there, and accordingly we went. Now we are elderly people, and prefer a soft and cosy hotel bed to the hard and dusty sleepers. So we took the day train, and lay over in Hamburg.

Our first acquaintance with that happy country was next morning when we got on board the Danish ferryboat in Grossenbrode, the German terminus of the recently inaugurated as-the-crow-flies-line via Lübeck. The boat had scarcely left the quay when a gong sounded and all the passengers started running as if everyone wanted to be the first to disembark at the other end. But it turned out that it was just for lunch. We secured a seat at a window table, and looked out for the waiter. But

Sven Lollik is the pen name of an American critic who for the last few years has been living in Northern Europe.

people were flocking around a large table in the middle of the saloon, so we took up our dinner plates and fought through to the front line. There were whole beefsteaks, loins of veal, pork, cold meats smoked and salted, small warm dishes, fried and pickled fish, salads, cheese, radishes, bread, butter and marmalades, scores and scores, and everybody filled his plate and returned to his table with the booty. Gaby went for the smoked salmon, I dug out a pork chop, half a salt herring, some liver sausage, salami, smoked ham, and a cold leg of mutton. Might always be more eclectic at the second round.

And then the waiter arrived. With foaming beer, and iced *akvavit*, the strong Danish grain gin without which no meal is complete, nor eel or cheese can be digested, he explained. Gaby is not fond of spirits, so I got three "snaps" at once, and drank to their health. The price of

the "cold table" was one dollar — you pay per capita, not per helping — and I've never spent that much money more pleasantly. Gaby's eyes grew bigger and bigger as the meal progressed. We had been told the Danes were good eaters. They did honor to their reputation. But we got evidence that, when opportunity offered, Germans, Swiss, and all others on board did their best to keep abreast of the natives. Only a young English lady, delicately gnawing on a small breast of chicken, seemed to be saying: "You Continentals are always thinking about eating. . . ."

IT IS TRUE that eating plays an important part in the life of the average Dane. Conversation turns upon how to prepare a *roedgroed* — fruit jelly with thick cream — or a *biksemad* — kind of meat pie, without the pie, and eaten hot, with a fried egg. Business is currently transacted, or sealed, across a lunch or dinner table. They will go out to the numerous restaurants with their families only to have a try at the cooking, some new specialty, or to ascertain that the old ones are still the same. And the Danish *smorrebroed* — sliced buttered bread, with all kinds of trimmings — are the objects of printed lists enumerating as many as a couple of hundred different delicacies to choose from. As Denmark is a food-producing country, "eating out" is generally cheap, and abundant. And if your budget is

limited you just pack your own victuals in a basket and most restaurants and inns, in town or in the country, will be glad to supply you with fork and knife, a saucer, salt, pepper, and mustard for nothing, or against a small fee (less than a dime); you only pay for the coffee and other drinks.

Some were still at table when the boat arrived at Gedser after a three hours' crossing. Gaby and I had gone out on deck to admire the low green shores, with fields dipping in the brackish waters of the Baltic. And the eight hundred of us were corralled through the customs office. There were four officers, to deal with passports, money control, and luggage, and the train was to leave in twenty minutes. So I succeeded in "passing through" a few trifles for our Danish friends: several bottles of whisky, flacons of French perfume, Dutch cigars, some yards of silk, and nylon stockings. Not to forget some pounds of coffee. All of which proved extremely welcome.

The Danes are a law-abiding people. They will declare their whole income to the last *oere* (one-seventh of a United States cent) to the tax collector if there are no means of doing otherwise. It is a sport much in favor among peasants and business men to let the collector try and guess how much more they have actually been earning. But sometimes he will get the better of them: he just names some very large amount, and

asks them to prove they have not earned that much. Many will acquiesce, rather than produce evidence that might turn out still more in favor of the collector. And so it is with customs duties. No self-respecting Dane would ever so much as think of smuggling. But just for the fun of it he takes a few things with him wherewith to boast before his friends that he did not pay the duties. Coffee is among the few commodities that are still rationed in Denmark, and the allocation is really too small, only a half pound a month. So a Dane who wants more coffee will just take the morning boat to Malmoe, the Swedish town opposite Copenhagen on the Sound, and return in the afternoon with himself, his wife, and four children each carrying the "regularly permitted" one pound (or two, if they can get away with stowing them about in their pockets) of the free Swedish brand. The coffee may turn out somewhat expensive, counting the traveling costs some \$2.00 or \$3.00 per pound, while the Danish ration price is less than \$1.00, and \$1.50 on the black market. But they will have had a splendid trip!

And at the twenty-first minute we were on board the train. But the train did not stir. We waited and we wondered. Eight hundred people were waiting and wondering. When suddenly a young lady swept out from a taxi and came running along the platform crying: "Gaby,

Sven, Gaby, Gaby . . ." So Gaby had to put her head out of the window, and there was Soffy, the date of our youngest son. "I just happened to be late home from swimming," she explained, "so the proprietor of the seaside resort phoned up the station master to let the train wait, and here I am. Welcome to Denmark!" We wanted to prove our gratitude to the station master with a cigar, but he was already blowing his pipe, and the train was off. Soffy snatched the cigar. "Cigarettes are only for children and messenger boys," she declared. Gaby is no smoker, fortunately; but she likes and knows a good cigar when she sees it. So Soffy puffed along.

THE TRAIN passed over the "Big-Stream" bridge, the longest in Europe, which connects the Isle of Falster with Seeland, and we reached Copenhagen in the evening. Rather than take a taxi to the hotel we walked on foot so that Gaby might see the town. The luggage was charged upon a "Long-John" — a bicycle with a big platform between the handle bars and the advanced front wheel. It is the common means of light transport in Denmark. A messenger boy — a *svajer* — of fifteen may convoy a bag of potatoes, a sewing machine, six ordinary bicycles, a double bed, or his mother-in-law upon one of these frail engines, navigating among streetcars, motor buses, cars, and above all the

thousands and thousands of bicycles that throng the streets of any Danish town. He seldom gets into trouble; and his glibness of tongue will usually help him out of it. But old ladies are running for their lives — with a “Bessemor [granny] keep steady” ringing after them.

“Aren’t you going to invite me to a fine dinner in Tivoli?” asked Soffy. There was the eating again! But I felt hungry; and Gaby is always glad when she sees me busy at a well-provided table; it is a sign of good health, she says. She has succeeded in keeping me in good health these many years; the butcher of our town will touch his hat when crossing me in the street — but not the apothecary. Tivoli is a kind of Central Park built upon the ramparts and moats of old Copenhagen but now located near the center of the city, next to the railway station. A very fine garden, with a lake, a Chinese tower, concert halls (free admittance, except at special performances), and open-air concerts, an acrobatic show and pantomime theater (also free), scenic railways, scores of amusement arcades, and some thirty bars and restaurants. At night the garden and buildings are splendidly illuminated. Admission to Tivoli is only sixty *oere* (less than a dime). There all classes of society mingle, royalty with bourgeois and workers, soldiers and midinettes, nurses and children, and visitors from all over the world. We had a

walk among the flowers, a ride on crocodile back in a merry-go-round, tried a rifle range, and finally settled down at an outdoor table of a restaurant where the boss was an old buddy of mine from the home guard, and where we could see the fireworks burned off from a raft on the lake.

YOU SHOULD KNOW that Copenhagen is a seaside town, the greatest harbor of Scandinavia, and fishermen will carry their overnight catch into the market place along a channel into the very heart of the city, so fish is very fresh and fine. We had an excellent lobster and a rainbow trout *au bleu*, with some fruit. A small band was blowing away on a dais opposite, admired by elderly ladies having a rest on the benches after their long walk from the entrance over fifty yards away. The young girls of Copenhagen are famous for their splendid looks, I’ve been told. Unfortunately, they all die young. At least, those of a more mature age are so unlike those sylph-like creatures that it must be presumed they have sprung from other loins, perhaps imported from barbaric countries where Hollywood standards are less appreciated. Or is it simply the succulent pastries that have helped the slim deities to take on those more worthy proportions we are admiring in the pictures of Rubens and Jordaens? Oh, the Danish pastries! Soffy had her double helping, Gaby a single of *lagkage*:

rolled paste with butter cream and whip cream and fruits and macaroons and whatnot, while I prudently nipped a bit on the corner of a saucer and for the rest contented myself with a cherry brandy — another Danish specialty and, by-the-by, the fancy of Gaby. Which was not overlooked.

The climax of a Copenhagen morning is the parade of the Royal Life Guards. Exactly at noon you may meet a procession of people of both sexes and all ages, but especially messenger boys — where do they all come from? and how can they afford to spend that time from their running business? — on foot, on ordinary bikes or “Long-Johns,” hastening through the narrow medieval streets. When some hundreds of them have passed there comes the Guards’ band, in dark blue, or on the King’s birthday in scarlet uniforms with bearskins, swords, and bayonets, piping and thundering a popular march tune and followed by another twenty-four privates likewise equipped, on the way to relieve the sentinels at the King’s palace of Amalienborg. All traffic stops, policemen clear the street, salesgirls stand at the doorsteps of their shops, and secretaries hang out of office windows. It isn’t for nothing the town is called: the King’s Copenhagen!

We took a bus along the Strandvej — the road alongside the Sound — where colorful gardens overhang

the sea, and every villa has its own wharf with a white bathing cabin at its outer end and a rowboat or sail or motor yacht moored sometimes inside the very lawns. The green Swedish coast with its white houses in the background, and the forts defending the entrance to Copenhagen as gray islands under the blue sky. The road is very narrow, I was glad we didn’t take our own car. I should never have dared to drive among the jumble of cyclists: single, or with a baby seated in a basket behind or in front, sometimes both, or hanging on in a pram trailer, scorning all traffic rules, riding three or four abreast, and acting like masters of the road. In a clash the police take their side. Motorists are considered an inferior, cumbersome race, just good enough to pay taxes, but who otherwise ought to keep off the roads.

The Strandvej is lined by villas and hotels on one or both sides the whole way from Copenhagen to Elsinore, thirty miles to the north. The fine old castle of Kronborg is situated on a promontory facing the Swedish town of Helsingborg on the other shore of the Sound, only three miles away. We arrived just in time for a performance of *Hamlet* by an Irish cast in the courtyard of the castle. His grave is said to be in a hotel garden nearby. But, slanderers say, there is only a tomcat buried beneath the tombstone; also, they say, Hamlet was actually the son of a

king of Jutland and never came to Elsinore. Be that as it may, Shakespeare's genius has rendered fiction truer than history, so we piously went and saw it.

We bought some post cards, and posted them at the only kind of drive-in to be found in Denmark, the red letter boxes placed at the curb so that cyclists may drive along and post their correspondence in the outer slot without dismounting. Leisure is the mother of inventions.

SOFFY'S MOTHER had phoned and invited us for the week end, so we took another bus and went down to Soroe next day. It is a small town — 3,000 inhabitants, all told — in the middle of Seeland. From the oldest times it was an intellectual center. The cell is shown where the Benedictine monk Saxo Grammaticus wrote his Denmark's Chronicle in the twelfth century. His patron, the bishop and statesman Absalon, founder of Copenhagen, lies buried behind the altar in the Roman church, next to medieval kings and noblemen with their wives, and the "Danish Molière," Ludvig Holberg. The trip was splendid, along smooth highways, through old towns, with combines and harvesters humming in the rich fields, apples shining from the orchards, and sea gulls swarming on the track of ploughmen.

The Soffy family owned a villa just behind the High Street and we

were received most cordially. The *apéritif* — I always considered cocktails a heresy — was served under the blooming clematis. The ladies were soon off on the household track. Fruit and vegetables, in spite of their abundance, were so expensive this year. A bundle of five(!) carrots cost more than a dime, asparagus thirty cents a pound, and plums nearly as much. Butter was going down, beef up, but the new agreement with England would cause a fall in the bacon. Moreover, all the tradesmen were thieves, they would give you underweight, and overcharge, and nothing was nowadays as in the good old times when a bun cost two *oere* and a pair of handmade snow boots four dollars. Harvest prospects are the universal subject of conversation for all in Denmark, peasants and townsmen alike. The whole economy of the country is hanging upon the prices for milk, wheat, and sugar beets — fortunately this year's is a bumper crop. Even the children are interested: school boys and girls from Copenhagen and the other towns will be invited by farmers to spend their holidays there, and they feel like kings, or cowboys, when riding out into the fields on top of a dung cart, or being allowed to sit up on the tractor.

After dinner we gathered on the veranda. Soffy's father is a teacher and a historian of international reputation. He told us about the coun-

try, its politics, and what there was worth seeing. Hans Andersen and Kierkegaard, Georg Brandes were reviewed. Above all we ought to visit the museum of Thorvaldsen in Copenhagen, the classic Danish sculptor of the nineteenth century whose Jason and Poniatowsky are known to art lovers in all countries. There were also the sculptors Bissen and Sinding, painters like Kroeyer and Zahrtmann.

GABY ASKED where she might hear some music. Summer is of course the off season, concert halls and opera are closed, but there are concerts in Tivoli twice a week. We listened to some gramophone records and found much pleasure in several Danish composers, especially Lumbye, a contemporary of Offenbach, and like him in the lighter vein. From that epoch were also Gade and Heise the ballad composer. Modern music is highly appreciated in Denmark, and a school of young composers have produced interesting ballets and operas. But as we should have to leave the country before the opening of the season we should not have the opportunity of hearing them, this time.

Sunday in such a small town is very different from what it is in a

metropolis. Gaby wanted to go to church with the family, while I took a stroll and had a look at the old places. All shops are closed, of course, bar the baker's, and only a stray cat is to be seen basking in the sunshine on its window sill. The Danes are not a religious people. The official creed is Lutheran Evangelicalism. But the majority of the people, except for getting baptized, married, and buried, seldom set their feet in church and will rather listen to the "worldly" prophets and philosophers. Some colleagues of Soffy's father came to dinner. They told us of the strong intellectual life among their pupils, whom they found immensely superior to the youth after the 1914-18 war. They were more profound, less materialistic, harder workers, and the wave of utilitarianism that had swept the country in the twenties and thirties appeared to them as gradually giving way to a higher understanding and respect for the value of classical and disinterested culture.

I had kept a bottle of whisky for the purpose — no real Scotch had been seen in Soroe these thirteen years — and Gaby had brought a box of chocolates from Brussels, so, in good old Danish fashion, we had coffee again on the veranda.

Does Communism start in the stomach? Does fire power decide?
No, says one political analyst, who holds that United States
foreign policy fails to recognize:

The Primacy of Politics

James Burnham

TWO UNDERLYING THEORIES have greatly affected United States policy toward Communism and the Soviet Union. On first thought, the two seem inconsistent with each other. In practice they go readily together. Both are widely believed and daily acted on by government officials. So deeply are they imbedded in the public as well as the official mind that unless they are torn out they may be expected to exercise their baneful influence even if the policy of the moment is sharply altered. No matter how plausible these theories may seem, no matter how authoritatively pronounced or

popularly accepted, both are demonstrably false and demonstrably injurious. They are not merely "doubtful," "only partly true," or "open to question." They are flatly false, and have been proved false by historical experience.

The first is the theory that "Communism is the product of adverse economic conditions." The second is the theory that "in the last analysis, fire power decides." I shall discuss them in that order.

Logically, the theory that Communism is a product of adverse economic conditions is a derivative of the more general theory of economic determinism: the doctrine that economic conditions are the fundamental cause and explanation of all that happens in history.

The American form of economic determinism affirms two basic propositions which though psychologically related are logically independent of each other. One is that bad economic conditions cause the growth

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and victory of Communism. The other is that an improvement in economic conditions will stop Communism. This double belief constitutes the avowed motivation for the Marshall Plan, the economic parts of the Mutual Security program, the economic aid to Asian and South American nations, the Point Four ("technical co-operation") program, the famine relief programs, and so on. American officialdom has backed up its doctrine to the tune of tens of billions of dollars.

Mr. William C. Foster was expressing the official doctrine plainly when as Deputy Director of the Economic Co-operation Agency (Marshall Plan) he said: "Europeans do not yet have a real good living standard, a standard which insulates them from Communist subversion from within." Harry Truman used to sum it up in the phrase, "stomach Communism."

IT IS NOT difficult to see why this doctrine is attractive to a rich and lazy nation. What it really suggests is that we can buy our way out of the present international crisis. If we spend enough money — which is after all the least of human sacrifices, especially when one has so much — then we can dispense with brains and will, courage and endurance and blood.

Lenin, on his side of the revolutionary fence, confronted this same belief early in his career. He called

it the "theory of spontaneity." One faction within the radical movement, appropriately named "economism," argued that revolutionary ideas and organization would arise "spontaneously" out of the daily grievances and struggles of the workers. Lenin sharply attacked this point of view. He insisted that the revolutionary theory and program had to be brought to the workers from "the outside," that workers would never spontaneously advance beyond "trade union consciousness" — that is, the effort to improve their wages and working conditions. As for revolutionary organization, that also could not develop spontaneously among workers and peasants, but only as a result of the deliberate action of professional revolutionists.

Lenin, the leading expert on the matter, was unquestionably correct. Communism is at one and the same time a set of beliefs and an organized apparatus. The beliefs are intricately elaborated, difficult and sophisticated. The disciplined organization combines the complexities of an army and a conspiracy. How could such an organization, holding such beliefs, arise "naturally" out of adverse economic conditions?

The contemporary facts are well enough known, and should not be ambiguous. Communism comes to a nation not spontaneously, but through the activities of a trained, centralized international enterprise with headquarters located in the Soviet

Union and agents operating everywhere on earth, in the best and worst economic conditions, among the poorest and the most wealthy. The only element of the economic determinist view which need even be considered seriously is the modest suspicion that the Communist enterprise finds bad economic conditions a favorable soil for its crop, and that conversely Communism cannot produce a harvest from good economic conditions. Many find this restricted doctrine so persuasive that they think it almost self-evident. It too, even with the maximum of qualification, is false.

TO SAY that Communism flourishes under bad economic conditions and is stopped by good economic conditions means to assert a positive correlation between Communism and bad conditions. If this correlation holds, it would follow that the strength of Communism within nations, classes and individuals would be roughly proportional to the badness of the economic situation — that is, to poverty. The richer a nation, class, or individual, the higher its standard of living, the less Communism; and vice versa.

The fact of the matter is that we do not find any correlation whatever, positive or negative, between the strength of Communism on the one side and economic conditions on the other. Communism has grown strong in both rich nations and poor,

among more and less favored classes. Communism has failed to grow strong in other nations and classes both rich and poor.

Czechoslovakia was much the richest nation of Eastern Europe. From shortly after World War I the Czechoslovak Communist Party has been, both absolutely and relatively, the largest of Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia, moreover, succumbed to Communist rule without direct armed intervention from the outside. If it is argued that she was under heavy Soviet pressure, which is true, it should be recalled that the pressure was considerably less than was put on Finland — a much poorer country which has not succumbed to Communism.

Turkey is a poor country, incomparably poorer than, say, France or Italy. After its defeat in World War I, and the consequent loss of its battered empire, Turkey was in particularly bad economic straits. From early in the 1920's, Turkey has had no Communists at all, other than a few Soviet agents and spies. France and Italy have had and continue to have mass Communist movements.

The Communist movement in Brazil has been relatively one of the two or three strongest in Latin America. Brazil is relatively one of the two or three richest Latin American nations. Though India and China are both incredibly poor, India is the poorer. It is China that the Communists have conquered.

If we state the problem in terms of "advanced" (industrial) vs. "primitive" (agricultural) economies, we find the same lack of correlation between Communist development and economic conditions. Communism has conquered or grown strong in advanced economies (Germany, Czechoslovakia, France), in primitive economies (China, Bulgaria, Indo-China), and in the intermediary economy of the Russian Empire. Communism has been relatively weak in other advanced economies (England, the Netherlands, the United States) and in other primitive economies (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Thailand).

If we use classes and individuals rather than nations as our point of reference, it can once more be shown that Communism is not a simple function of poverty. No matter how it may seem "logically," it is just not true that Communism makes its primary appeal to the poorest classes or the poorest individuals.

In the United States the percentage of Communist college professors is much higher than the percentage of Communist railroad laborers, small farmers, or ditchdiggers. Hollywood and Broadway actors, producers, writers, and directors, drawing thousands of dollars a week, have flocked into the Communist movement, but not steel workers or coal miners. There are relatively more lawyers and dentists than truck drivers within the American Com-

munist orbit. Alger Hiss was not one of the grossly underprivileged.

Asia is not different in this respect from America or Europe. The lowest classes of the Asian countries do not become Communist. It is almost physiologically impossible for them to do so. To be a Communist involves a kind of surplus activity, mental and physical, over the bare business of living. The masses of India, China, Pakistan, and the Arab nations live a desperate, diseased, perpetually famished existence. They have neither time nor energy nor thought for the luxury of Communism.

COMMUNISM, I repeat, is a disciplined, centralized world enterprise, geographically based on the Soviet Union but operating everywhere. It is a power — that is, a *political* — apparatus. Communism does not mysteriously "arise" in this or that nation, class, or individual. It is *brought* by the agents and influence of this dynamic enterprise.

When working on a nation, the Communist enterprise finds it advantageous to exploit whatever rifts, conflicts, and tensions may exist there, or which it can stimulate. These rifts may be of any sort — ideological, racial, religious, linguistic, cultural, and also, of course, economic. The rifts and tensions do not in themselves specifically favor Communism. They constitute a weakness in the social fabric. Any other

conscious, disciplined organization could also exploit them. What determines whether Communism (or any comparable enterprise) will become strong and eventually conquer is not the presence of the rifts, but the character of the leadership that opposes the attempted subversion.

The historical evidence shows that the major condition for Communist success is a wishy-washy government, a government (or governing class) that cannot make up its mind with respect to the political issues, that cannot *choose*. This major condition is *political*—not economic, material, cultural, or ideological. It does not even seem to make much difference what choice is made (“reactionary” or “progressive,” right or left, war or peace), so long as there *is* a choice. Men must feel that they are going somewhere, that they are moving in some definite direction. If their existing leadership can’t give them that feeling then they will turn to one that will.

In Russia in 1917, the crucial issues were the war, food, and land distribution. The Kerensky government couldn’t make up its mind to fight or not to fight, to distribute or preserve the large estates. The government was full of high-minded sentiment, and had the allegiance of many intelligent, able individuals. But it fell before the drive of the Bolsheviks with not much more than a whimper. If not the Bolsheviks, it would have been Kornilov.

For Czechoslovakia from 1945 on there was just one crucial issue: to line up with Moscow or with the West. The Benes-Masaryk government did not answer the problem one way or the other. It did not declare unequivocally either for or against Moscow; it was going to be a “bridge” between East and West that would prove the two to be reconcilable. The end came with the Communists in power and Masaryk jumping out of the window. Finland, weaker than Czechoslovakia in population, industry, and resources, was confronted with a much harsher choice. Finland answered firmly not only in words but with guns. Finland, though harassed and circumscribed, is still free. Greece also gave a flat answer; and Greece also is free.

IN CHINA the problems were many and immense. In the period following the war, probably two were crucial: the land and the Communists. The peasantry, the great majority of the population, could be held only by a dynamic land program. To the threatened advance of the Communists a Yes or No answer had to be given: to crush the Communists or submit to them.

No answer was given to either problem. In spite of all the talk and small-scale action here and there, the government of Chiang Kai-shek never did initiate a dynamic land program on a broad national scale. So far as the Communists went, the

answer changed from month to month: bottle them up, resist them, compromise with them, capitulate, form coalition governments, "democratize". . . . The decisive period, which coincided more or less with the presence of General Marshall in 1946-47, was squandered in the Kerensky-like plan for a coalition government — a pseudo-policy which was in reality the abandonment of all policy.

In the case of China, the political failure which was the condition of Communist success cannot be attributed solely, perhaps not even primarily, to the Chinese Nationalist government. After the long years of the Japanese war and occupation, the attrition of open and disguised civil war, and the liabilities carried over from its more distant past, China could have met its two crucial issues only with the help and firm guidance of the United States. Neither help nor firm guidance was given. The influence of the United States was used not to promote but to prevent a firm policy. In particular, the specific objective of the Marshall mission was to block any program to crush the Communists: to prevent Chiang, that is to say, from giving a clear answer, the only possible answer, to the Communist problem. The United States cannot avoid a full share in the responsibility for the Communist conquest of China.

This kind of paralyzing interven-

tion by the United States has not been confined to China. India today is analogous to China in 1946. The same two issues are crucial: the land, and the threat of Soviet-backed Communism. For India, the problem of the land is both technological (new agricultural methods) and sociological (a new system of ownership). In both aspects what is required of the Indian government is a program able to arouse the enthusiasm of the active elements of the masses. The problem of Communism is both internal and external. Its solution, as in the case of China, demands the crushing of the internal Communists, and, internationally, an unequivocal stand on the anti-Soviet side of the world struggle.

Nehru's government answers neither one problem nor the other, or rather gives a dozen different partial answers as mood and occasion shift. Nehru plays around with local land reform projects, technical or social, just enough to get headlines in the domestic and world press. Toward Communism he shifts almost by the hour: a few local Communists in jail here, there a delegation singing the praises of Mao Tse-tung; a self-righteous speech condemning both capitalism and Communism, and an ambassador proclaiming the virtues of Stalin; slander about internal American conditions while eating American grain; sabotage of anti-Communist operations in Korea while protesting India's serene nonpartisan-

ship; fulsome welcomes to Soviet "cultural" visitors, and a parliamentary speech condemning Communist "materialism."

Granted India's condition, the strength of India's Communists, and the weight of Soviet pressure, Nehru's present course indicates the Communist conquest of India within the next decade. The United States, far from acting to shift the direction, works as if to confirm it. Proceeding on the economic determinist theory of "stomach Communism," some aid, principally food, medicine, and other immediate relief commodities, is shipped in. A few small technical projects along lines of agricultural improvement, river control, and the like — all good enough in their limited terms but without political force — are started. Meanwhile, political relations have been put into the hands of people like Eleanor Roosevelt and Chester Bowles, persons with the same kind of vague and indecisive temperament as Nehru's own. Instead of clarifying the mind and stiffening the backbone of the Indian government, the representatives of the United States go along with its most confused and debilitating actions. They shamelessly flatter Nehru and his family, soften at Nehru's criticism of the previous mild anti-Communism of the United States propaganda services, and set out to conquer the heart of the East by sending diplomats' children to native schools, confessing American

sins, and riding to the embassy on bicycles.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S procedure in France has been basically the same. The Communists are the most powerful French political movement. If they cannot today take over the government, or do not wish to, they are able to cripple any major French action that they sufficiently oppose. In particular, they can prevent France from functioning effectively within an anti-Soviet military coalition. The internal Soviet-directed Communists are, then, one of the crucial issues now faced by France. There are two others: escape from production-stifling cartelized economic forms, and rapid advance toward European economic and political unification. Toward all three problems, the kaleidoscopic French governments since 1947 have shown the same indecisiveness and straddling, the same inability to answer and to decide, that are the classic conditions for the success of Communism.

The United States, in accordance with its economic determinist premise, has pumped vast quantities of material aid into France. After five years and at least five billion dollars, everything is just where it started from. This should not be surprising, because the essential condition has been left untouched. To throw the Communists back takes more than money, bread, cotton, and textile

machinery. It requires first and primarily a firm, clear policy, a decision, definite answers to the basic questions. This is the requirement that the wobbling centrist French governments by their very nature cannot meet. These governments depend for their existence on balancing opposing forces, not on solving problems.

Just why the State Department has so often favored policies and governments which prevent a determined fight against Communism is something of a mystery. I believe that it is partly because weak governments are easier to manipulate. The fact that they may not be worth manipulating is forgotten in the relief at being assured of a compliant answer in public, and a supporting vote at international meetings. The second reason for the preference is, I think, that the State Department has itself had the same political style as the wishy-washy governments which it has favored, and has been temperamentally inclined toward the same kind of straddling, no-decision policies.

THE EVIDENT, practical conclusion that the primary method of meeting Communism must be political, not economic, does not imply opposition to economic aid for the non-Communist nations which need aid. We may choose to give aid out of purely humanitarian motives, or because we think it good business.

Let us then give aid, but let us not suppose that by doing so we are going to stop Communism.

In the struggle against Communism economic measures are useful only to the extent that they promote anti-Communist political or ideological results. This lesson we can learn from the Communists, who inside or outside the Soviet Empire never take any economic action for its own sake but always with an eye toward its political effects.

The "agrarian program" has been, for example, the principal feature of Communist propaganda and action in Asia. Many non-Communists are deceived into thinking that the purpose of the agrarian program is to meet the problems of the agrarian economy. This is not at all the case, as a careful examination of the program will prove. Land distribution as advocated by the Communists results in most countries in the breakup of farms into unworkably small holdings. The purpose of the Communists, however, is not economic but political. They aim through their agrarian program to stir the peasants into action under their leadership, and to weaken the prestige and power of social classes that are opposed to Communism. It does not trouble them that their program means a lower instead of increased production of food. They have in any case no intention of leaving the land under the indi-

vidual proprietorship of the peasants. When a Communist government becomes firmly installed, it begins the process of collectivization. This is once again an economic measure used for a political end — the *de facto* expropriation of the peasantry in order to destroy the socio-economic basis on which the peasants could function as an opposition social group.

If economic aid is to further an anti-Communist purpose, the same rule must be followed in reverse. It can't be just a question of immediate relief or (as the Marshall Plan has seemed to the European masses) of patching up the old machine. Aid must be related to large programs and lofty goals, to a crusading spirit and inspiring changes, and it must especially be presented in such a way as to appeal to the youth — to offer ambitious young people something to do now and the hope of still greater things that will become possible tomorrow.

A principal reason for the lethargy of such countries as France and Italy is the simple fact that able young men and women in them have nothing to do, and are given nothing to look forward to. The politico-economic situation offers them hardly any jobs with a chance for fame and fortune, and for the feeling of a significant task accomplished. Under the policy of containment — that is, a policy of indefinite stalemate — the billions of dollars of aid

alter very little this dismal and negative prospect. For it to change appreciably, the youth must be able to see vast new possibilities ahead: the real development of Africa as a European frontier; an economic unification of Europe, with the economic structural revolution which this would bring; the lifting of the Iron Curtain (that is, the liberation of Eastern Europe), with the immense opportunities which would thereby arise for West European brains and industry; the reopening of the Far East to an era no longer of colonial exploitation but of co-operative economic advance.

A YOUNG FRIEND of mine who spends his time trying to promote what he believes to be a major political warfare project managed early in 1952 to get an appointment with General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff of the Army. While my friend made his presentation, General Collins listened with what seemed to be attention, understanding, and sympathy. After he had finished, General Collins leaned forward and said politely:

"Yes, young man, but in the end isn't it all a question of fire power?"

This question was not a personal foible of the Army's Chief of Staff. It is an expression of the second false theory that lies back of American thinking on problems of foreign policy. In the last analysis, in the showdown, fire power decides.

Diplomacy, economic aid, propaganda, treaties, and Leagues of Nations are all very well for amateurs and shadow boxing. When it comes to the main bout: fire power, that's what counts.

The theory of the supremacy of fire power is, naturally enough, most widely held among the military.* It is often found alongside the economic determinist theory. As applied to the struggle against Communism, the two might seem to be incompatible: if Communism is a product of bad conditions and is stopped by improving economic conditions, then it would seem that victory or defeat for Communism is not going to be decided by fire power. Nevertheless, the two theories function in a single mind as a kind of first and second reserve. The economic determinist theory backs up the economic operations of peacetime. Officially speaking, all problems are going to be solved "without war." The fire power theory rests in deeper echelon, ready to be brought forward when the shift to shooting takes place.

The fire power theory seems to be very practical, realistic, down-to-earth. To many persons, it also seems to be substantiated histor-

ically, in particular by the history of the United States during the past century. United States diplomacy, policy, treaties during this century have not been very wise or adroit. In all of the wars from the Mexican War on, however, the United States, either alone or with allies, has brought superior fire power to bear, has always won, and is still going strong.

NO MATTER HOW REALISTIC the fire power theory may seem, it is demonstrably false. It is not false in quite the same way as the economic determinist theory. That is just false, mistaken, from beginning to end. The fire power theory is false when stated as a general historical hypothesis, but it is true or approximately true when formulated with suitable restrictions.

In a single engagement, the side that brings the greater fire power to bear on the contested spot usually wins. In a full-scale battle, the situation is not quite so simple. It is still true that the side which brings the greater fire power to bear on the key point will probably win. That is not necessarily the same thing as to say that the side which *possesses* the greater fire power will win. Superior maneuvers, strategy, or politics may mean more effective employment of quantitatively inferior fire power.

The case of a mutiny or civil war is much plainer. If the fire power

* I am here using the term "fire power" as a symbol for military factors in general. American military doctrine is often criticized (by the British, for example) for placing too much reliance on "fire power" in the narrow sense as against "maneuver." I am not concerned with this technical controversy.

theory were true, no revolt would ever have succeeded. The established authorities are always initially superior in fire power to the rebels. By political means, daring, and cleverness, the rebels seize or immobilize part of the fire power.

EVEN if it is true that a war in being is decided by fire power, that is still a conclusion of derivative importance. Which side will act in the way that will produce its own power potential? If the United States is physically and economically capable of having the largest quantity of fire power in the world, it does not follow that it will so act as actually to have it. The United States may prefer to make television sets rather than warplanes.

In 1944-45, the Allied armies under Eisenhower in Europe held the greatest quantity of fire power that had ever been assembled. Theoretically, that fire power could have been employed to prevent the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe and the consequent strategic unbalancing of Eurasia. Stalin, though relatively much inferior in fire power, was superior in political knowledge and political resolution. Stalin and the Communist generals were therefore able to immobilize and even thrust back Roosevelt and the Allied generals.

Immediately following the war, the United States, by virtue of its monopoly of nuclear weapons, had

an incomparable advantage in effective fire power. Stalin replied to the nuclear weapons not with counter-fire power but with politics. He seduced the nuclear scientists, and paralyzed the will of the opposing leadership. The atomic bomb became even more useless than the gold buried under Fort Knox: the gold at least serves a positive purpose so long as it is believed in; the bomb became a source of embarrassment and guilt-feeling instead of an asset. It was transformed from a symbol of material power into a proof of political impotence.

With respect to nuclear weapons, conditions have not greatly changed. Although the United States still has overwhelming superiority in nuclear armament, it cannot make any use of this superiority — it cannot even threaten in a voice that will be taken seriously. Why should I worry about my opponent's bigger fist, if I can talk him out of punching? The bombs dropped with such a fanfare from public relations officers on the Nevada flats do not kill any Communists, and do not even frighten them while they remain sure that the United States lacks the will to employ them in combat. That this is the case is proved to them daily in Korea. It is mere pretense to declare that "military considerations" have dictated the failure to use nuclear weapons in Korea. The enemy knows, the Allied governments know, and

the American leadership knows that from a purely military point of view nuclear weapons would unquestionably have been used—at the very least for experimental and training purposes. The reason for not using them is political. The wiles of the opponent, bellowed from the Moscow and satellite radios, echoed from the Communist and fellow-traveling press, sugared over by the Partisans of Peace, shrewdly playing on the weaknesses and fears of our Allies, reaching through the minds of agents or dupes directly into our own councils, have succeeded in neutralizing our superior fire power.

PERHAPS the most spectacular of all recent demonstrations of the inadequacy of the fire power theory was the Kojé Island affair in the spring of 1952. Tens of thousands of Communist prisoners, totally disarmed, without a shred of fire power, had been brought to Kojé Island and there placed behind barbed wire fences guarded by thousands of soldiers with almost limitless fire power at their disposal. Within a few months the prisoners were in virtual control of the island. They had set up their own courts, execution chambers, government, communications. For many weeks,

they had sovereignty over the interior of the compounds. They seized and held hostage the enemy commanding officer. They negotiated as equals, and exacted humiliating terms and confessions from their fire-powered but paralyzed captors.

The explanation for the Kojé affair, one of the most disgraceful in American history, is purely political. It has obviously nothing to do with fire power. On the Communist side, there was a superior policy carried out with knowledge, resolution, and determined leadership. On the American side, there were only brave soldiers, uninformed of the nature of the enemy, and castrated by a disastrous policy and an irresponsible political leadership.

An analysis of the theory of the supremacy of fire power leads to the same conclusions that we reach after analyzing the theory of the purely economic source and cure of Communism. The theory is false, and most damaging in its practical consequences. Our age is the age of the primacy of politics. Without correct policy, money and arms are nothing. Equipped with an adequate policy, with a political goal, and the political will to pursue it, men will find—or take—the money and arms.

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IN OUR READERS' OPINION

BRITISH IMPERIALISM

» I enjoyed "In Defense of British Imperialism," by Peter Viereck [September, 1952]. I think that the values implicit in the old British imperialism badly needed defending. Too often, university professors make our Declaration of Independence a universal yardstick, with the result that their students go into public life and apply the slogans of the American Revolution to practically every situation in international affairs.

One such instance is American interference in North Africa, where we have been covertly, and sometimes overtly, encouraging the native nationalists. There is not much statesmanship in such a policy when one considers what it does to the balance of forces in the Mediterranean area, and the justified resentment it causes in France. Obviously, the only way to freedom for North Africa is by calm, evolutionary stages, as the colonies of Great Britain moved up in status. Very likely, this would have to be done under the U.N. today, but it is still possible to arrive at a formula of greater independence geared to greater responsibility and cultural advancement.

I look forward to the whole of Peter Viereck's forthcoming book, *Shame and Glory of the Intellectuals*. The academic world, more than anyone, must be made to abandon, or at least de-empha-

size, a thinking based on the shifting sands of liberalism, and to re-enter a conservative structure, in which there are still many mansions for them to inhabit, but which is organized along a hierarchy of sound moral values.

RAYMOND L. CAROL
LE MOYNE COLLEGE
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

EUROPEAN NEUTRALISM

» I thought your article on "The Threat of European Neutralism" [by Peter Meyer, September, 1952] was an excellent revelation of what we are up against in our fight against Communism and our military preparations against any impending Soviet onslaught.

M. LUCHKOVICH
EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

» About your article in the September MERCURY, "How Ike Can Win," I agree with you that F.E.P.C. is a political football and within that context it is evil. However, may I ask you how in conscience *any* government can fail to provide equal opportunities for all its citizens? You call it a dangerous extension of government powers. Again I agree those powers need checking — badly. But you fail utterly to come up with any suggestion to change the basic

injustice of a system that enables a government to spend billions of *all* the citizens' taxes without any guarantee that *all* the citizens can have equal consideration for employment in the plants where that tax money is spent. You cannot ignore this problem and expect it to go away quietly. We who have to face this evil every day in the year will never forget it.

CHRIS. D. BEANE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

SOUTH AFRICA

» Allow me to congratulate you on the excellent article in your August issue, "Crisis in South Africa," by Serge Fliegers.

I am a South African by naturalization and I served during the last war with the government of the late General Smuts in Pretoria. I am lecturing on South African matters and would like to confirm that Mr. Fliegers gave us an absolutely correct and very clear description of the present state of affairs in that country.

OTTO VON STRAHL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

HATRED IN COLOMBIA

» As an avid MERCURY reader I would like to congratulate you on the fine "Letter from Colombia" by Peter Schmid ["Sinners, Saints, and Civil War," September, 1952]. After reading his article, all the various tidbits of information about this country which I find now and then in the newspapers seem to fall into their proper place.

Perhaps it will interest you to know that *Time* magazine (September 22,

1952) confirmed Mr. Schmid's contention that "it is hard to imagine how all the violence will ever end," when it quoted the Conservative paper, *El Colombiano*, as saying: "We are riding a wildly spinning wheel where today's victims become tomorrow's executioners and these, in turn, the future victims. Each victim feeds on the idea of retaliation, so that there will be enough hatred in Colombia for the next 150 years."

Give us more such informative articles.

DAVID JENKER
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

COLOMBIAN ABSURDITIES

» Peter Schmid, in his "Sinners, Saints, and Civil War" [September, 1952], says absurdity triumphs in Colombia. It also triumphs in Mr. Schmid's letter from there.

For instance, Mr. Schmid says, "In Colombia . . . even the doctrines of such important modern Catholic thinkers as Jacques Maritain receive only a kind of theoretical acknowledgment."

And then he immediately continues by quoting a citizen of Colombia thus: "The basis of our spiritual life is scholasticism, and especially the scholasticism of Saint Thomas."

Isn't there *anyone* who could have told Mr. Schmid that Jacques Maritain is today's outstanding authority on the scholasticism of Saint Thomas? That's what Maritain is teaching in our colleges and universities. The name Jacques Maritain is almost synonymous with the study of the scholasticism of Saint Thomas.

And the way he says "the doctrines

of such . . . thinkers as Jacques Maritain" one would think Maritain were propounding personal doctrines of his own. He holds to the doctrines of the church, and they are the same doctrines the church held in the Middle Ages.

Speaking of the latter, Mr. Schmid seems to think the Middle Ages were backward, barbarous times. Today's historians know better. There was a great deal more social awareness and social justice in the Middle Ages of Christian Europe than there have been in the past three centuries of de-Christianized Europe.

Mr. Schmid's final paragraph is the kind that makes one gnash teeth in desperation. After telling us in his article about how deeply ingrained is religion in the people, even the politicians, of Colombia, he quotes a leading psychiatrist of that country as saying: "We believe in the objective power of the Holy Ghost, who works through us." This, as a basis for their hope for the country.

And Mr. Schmid's comment on this is: "I feared for the Holy Ghost — the Devil is stronger, at least in Colombia."

When the psychiatrist said "the Holy Ghost," he was referring to *God*. And if the people are so devoted to God and have such trust in God's Power, then how does Mr. Schmid figure the Devil is stronger than God in Colombia?

PEGGY WINK
NORTHPORT, NEW YORK

THE PAPER-COVERED REVOLUTION

» Strictly apart from my personal and selfish interest in what you had to say about our Gold Medal operation ["The Paper-Covered Revolution," by Evan

Jones, September, 1952], I should like to congratulate you on a very well-organized and exceedingly well-written article.

WILLIAM C. LENGEL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, GOLD MEDAL BOOKS
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

NO MORE EVEREST?

» In connection with Morton Clurman's interesting article on mountain climbing in your October issue ["Attempting Everest"], I would like to call your attention to an item I read in the *New York Times* of August 29, 1952.

Reporting on the six Swiss alpinists who are trying to climb Everest this November, under the leadership of Dr. Gabriel Chevalley, and equipped with new oxygen equipment, the *Times* wrote:

It is unusual for an attempt on Everest to be made after the monsoon season. The reason the Swiss are going back now is that the Government of Nepal has given them permission to approach the mountain through its territory valid only for this year.

Nepal has furthermore announced that this will be the last European Everest expedition permitted to pass through the country.

As the only other route to the mighty mountain is through Communist-held Tibet, the current Swiss party is not only the last hope of their fellow countrymen for the cherished victory, they are perhaps the last hope of the West. A Russian expedition is rumored to be in preparation.

It seems to me a pity that even

the noble sport of mountain climbing has become involved in politics, and I would not be surprised to read very soon that some "glorious" Soviet expedition has placed Uncle Joe's picture on top of Old Everest, for the first time.

GEORGE BENTHEIMER
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE COMMON PLACES

» In the August issue I found "In the Land of Dan'l Boone" by Alexander Marshack. What a fine piece of writing! This is the sort that distinguishes the *MERCURY* from all other magazines. To take those common, everyday places in the vast outposts of our civilization and breathe into them the breath of a life and land, which, through our forefathers, brought us on to the present.

ROBERT BRYAN FLANARY
KINGSPORT, TENNESSEE

HOPALONG CASSIDY?

» Wallace Markfield, in his somewhat vague and lopsided attack on the Western ["The Inauthentic Western," September, 1952], obviously believes that Western movies should be nothing more than Hopalong Cassidy skits, where the good guy licks the bad guy, and virtue always wins. (Indeed, he never quite says what an "authentic" Western should be, to his mind. Except, perhaps, that it should have a "circular" movement — whatever that is.)

Agreed that many of our present Westerns carry too much of what might be called "social significance" or patriotic puffing. But a film devoid of any psychological, social, or other implica-

tions would lead us right back again into the "empty" phase of Hollywood which this much-maligned industry has just been trying to overcome in the last decade.

ANDREW F. GERDSON
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

THE WILD IRISH

» Peter Kavanagh's line of nonsense in the September issue of the *MERCURY*, "My Wild Irish Weekly," reflects more on his own mentality than it does on the Irish people.

He informs us that under the rule of de Valera the whole basis of Irish society has broken down; that in the course of the next ten years Ireland will be well on the way to its prehistoric barbaric state; that the country areas are being taken over by retired English and Indian army officers, and that you could travel the whole length and breadth of Ireland without seeing a farmer even with the aid of a telescope.

Now, just in case he wasn't joking, let it be stated that any fair-minded person will admit Ireland pays her debts; that her hand is not continually in the American taxpayer's pocket; and that honor and integrity are still highly regarded there.

P. J. COYNE
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS

SPEAKING FRANKLY

» Not often do I take time off to write an editor to praise or damn something in his journal, but I must write you to say that I like very much C. K. Thomas' article in the September issue of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* — "Ameri-

canon: Speaking Frankly." This article is based on actual observations, is sound in its conclusions, and is well written. Too often an article or book can be based on facts and be logical, but can be so dead in style that it puts the reader to sleep.

GEORGE P. WILSON
SECRETARY,
AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

tures to account for their existence? What, for that matter, brings about the *division* of one language into several dialects — over and above the question of how those dialects are distributed? It's a side of American history that doesn't seem to be considered very often.

LT. ARTHUR L. THOMAS
LOWRY AIR FORCE BASE
DENVER, COLORADO

DIALECT—NO CRIME

» Just a line in appreciation of "Speaking Frankly" by C. K. Thomas in your September issue. Having lived in a good many sections of the country myself, his appreciation of the various American "dialects" interested me greatly. I have been for years a northerner with a "southern dialect" and am glad of the consolation that — at least to one speech expert — that is no crime!

L. E. WOOD
HADDON HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

SPEECH BOUNDARIES

» If one Thomas may congratulate another, I'd like to say that I was especially interested by the article "Speaking Frankly" by C. K. Thomas in your September issue. I think what interested me most were the occasional references the writer made to the historical backgrounds of differences in pronunciation — and I for one would appreciate a further article by Prof. Thomas developing this aspect of the matter a bit farther. What, for instance, determines his speech boundaries when there are no obvious geographic fea-

SOUTH AFRICA'S CRISIS

» I have read with appreciation Mr. Fliers' article on South Africa in the August issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY.

It seems to me an excellent article indeed.

EMORY ROSS
AFRICA COMMITTEE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE
CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE
U. S. A.

MR. SCHLESINGER'S RECORD

» As an enrolled Liberal Party voter who is supporting neither Stevenson nor Eisenhower in this campaign, I should like to add, in the interests of truth and justice, one item about Mr. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., which was omitted from Mr. James Burnham's characterization of him in the October issue. This is that, as Mr. Schlesinger's writings make abundantly clear, he is one of the leading anti-Communist figures of our generation. His position may be gauged by the fact that Carey McWilliams, a notorious apologist for Soviet totalitarianism, has bitterly denounced him in the fellow-traveling

New Statesman and Nation as a "McCarthy with a Harvard accent." Although I have my disagreements with Mr. Schlesinger, I for one believe that he is a far more intelligent, and in the long run, more effective opponent of Communism than Senator McCarthy.

SIDNEY HOOK
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

A REPLY

» Liberals seem to be developing a polarized sense of political decorum. No smear thrown at those whom they classify as the right produces even a twitch of their nostrils. But say so much as boo to a brother of the vital left of center and they are apt to bleat like lambs at South Chicago. I don't see how political discussions will any longer be possible if we have to surround every remark about an individual with a citation of his anti-Communist record. My article did not purport to be a biography of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. My topic was Adlai Stevenson and I listed what I believe are three facts about his research director, who happens to be Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.: that he solidarized himself with John K. Fairbank, William Remington, and the Institute of Pacific Relations. These facts are not grounds for hanging, but in my judgment they make Professor Schlesinger a questionable advisor for a potential president. I can hardly believe that Sidney Hook finds them a strong recommendation.

JAMES BURNHAM
WASHINGTON, D. C.

IRISH MANNERS

» Reference is made to the article appearing in the March, 1952, issue of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* under the by-line of Peter Kavanagh and dealing with the matter of "Teaching Manners to the Irish."

The undersigned was appointed chairman of a committee of this Society to investigate and report on the said article and its contents. After a careful study of all the facts and circumstances a report was made to the regular meeting of the Society held September 2, 1952.

I am authorized and directed to inform you that at said meeting a resolution was unanimously adopted condemning said article as false in fact and scurrilous in intent. We regard the article as an insult to all Irishmen and we regret that you find it necessary to open your columns to Mr. Kavanagh's perverted sense of humor.

PATRICK G. FINEGAN
TRUSTEE, MONAGHAN SOCIETY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

CORRECTION

» There are two small errors of fact in James Burnham's article, "The Case Against Adlai Stevenson" (October, 1952), which we should like to correct:

Marshall Field was not the publisher of the *Compass*, as erroneously stated on page 17, but of *PM*, the *Compass'* journalistic predecessor. The *Compass*, of course, did not exist in the thirties.

Mrs. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., is not the sister of John K. Fairbank, as stated on page 17; she is his sister-in-law.

— ED.

Hobart L. Pendleton

Taxes and Initiative

Should the Constitution Limit Taxes?

HERE are some questions for every thinking American of good-will, Democrat or Republican:

Do you want the federal government to become the *sole source* of capital in this country?

Do you want more and more money power delivered into the hands of the federal government and less and less money power held in the hands of private citizens?

Do you want every young Ameri-

.....
Many Americans feel that some effort must soon be made toward constitutional limitation of the peacetime taxing power of our federal government. During the next few months the MERCURY will present several proposals, including its own, for such a constitutional amendment. Here is a statement in support of the so-called 25% Amendment, which is being advocated by a number of citizen groups. Hobart L. Pendleton, who took "Another Look at World Federation" in the June AMERICAN MERCURY, is a free-lancer writing on economics and politics.

can with an idea for building that better mouse trap to have to go to the government for financing? Or had you rather preserve the opportunity for that young man to get his financial backing from his friends and relatives or in the public market place?

Because of the existence of *private investment capital*, not many young Americans with a sound idea for making the better mouse trap have ever gone without backing. This is the process by which America has been built: by men with ideas being able to find money to spend on their development.

Would we have become a nation of automobile owners if Henry Ford had been unable to find men with savings they were willing to risk on his idea?

Do we want our future Henry Fords to have to thread through all the Washington bureaus in the hope of getting government money?

If this situation develops, then the industrial progress of America is likely to slow down. For the lessons of the past are clear: when government becomes the *sole source* of *investment* capital, stagnation sets in.

Yet this is certain to be our fate unless the majority of Americans are now willing to concede that it is *proper* for us citizens to limit the *peacetime* taxing power of the federal government.

When our nation is threatened by an external enemy, we must, of course, take risks with the economic fabric; but when these threats are reduced and we are at peace, shouldn't the citizen have some constitutional understanding as to how much of his earnings he must deliver to the government?

As a matter of fact, unless we can impose some constitutional limitation on the taxing power of the federal government, then our taxes are likely to be made higher and higher, with more and more of our earnings being spent at the discretion of the government and less and less at the discretion of the individual. Eventually and inevitably then, the federal government will become the sole source of investment capital, and our individual initiative system will be at an end.

This, of course, is the end desired by those Americans who are frankly socialists. Mr. Norman Thomas forthrightly advocates higher and

higher taxes, the elimination of private reservoirs of capital, more and more of our earnings spent at government discretion, and less and less at individual discretion.

However, Americans who call themselves Republicans and Democrats have, until now, been deeply concerned with the preservation of private capital. They have wanted the federal government to spend only a modest portion of our earnings, with most of the money left to individuals.

IN AN EFFORT to restrain the peacetime taxing power of the federal government, fourteen years ago, Robert B. Dresser, a Rhode Island attorney, proposed that state legislatures memorialize Congress to enact and refer to the states a constitutional amendment limiting income tax rates to a maximum of 25 per cent. Twenty-five states have now petitioned Congress to submit such an amendment. The American Bar Association has endorsed the movement, and the Gallup Poll has indicated that 68 per cent of our citizens favor such action.

The next Congress is expected to consider this amendment which is now sponsored by Senator Everett M. Dirksen and Representative Chauncey W. Reed, both of Illinois.

This proposed legislation, of course, is being attacked as a "rich man's law." And members of Congress, knowing that there are more

poor men than rich ones, are reluctant to take what appears to be the risk of advocating "relief for the rich."

However, sober consideration will reveal that poor men, too, have a stake in such limitation.

In the first place the very rich men in America can avoid taxes if they choose. They have only to lend their money to government, quit trying to build or "earn a profit," and then live off the tax-free income paid them by government.

What is being taxed unfairly are the earnings of *productive* men. In our history of fabulous industrial development, most of the money to finance new ventures or expand old enterprises has come from the savings of persons having incomes over \$12,000 a year.

But now we have come to this point: the government is imposing confiscatory tax rates on incomes above \$12,000 a year. These earnings do not become savings for investment in new machinery so that other men can use the machines to earn higher standards of living; these

earnings go into taxes to support government.

If these earnings above \$12,000 a year supported an appreciable share of the government, they might be justified. But if the government confiscated *every cent* of earnings above \$12,000 a year, there would not be enough money to support the government for ten weeks. Poor men today are paying most of the cost of government.

With our present tax rates on higher incomes, we are drying up the reservoirs for private investment in new enterprise, yet we are getting nothing comparable in return for this sacrifice.

What the Reed-Dirksen Amendment proposes to do is to establish a peacetime tax understanding between the individual producer and the federal government. It proposes to make certain that future young Americans with ideas can go into a free market place and find money to help them.

Those of us who are supporting this amendment believe that this is a way to insure a healthy America.

Note

Reprints of this article can be obtained from THE AMERICAN MERCURY, 11 East 36th Street, New York 16, New York, at \$5.50 per hundred.

James Rorty

Poison In Every Pot?

Food, Water, and the Freedom of Science

ALL SORTS of man-caused disasters hang over the head of the modern world. "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust" — so runs the locust chant of our cosmological Cassandras — "if the atom bomb doesn't get us, erosion must."

Our health resources, like our soils, are subject to erosion. One of the slower and less dramatic methods of self-destruction we might adopt is that of slow poison.

For the past two years the House Select Committee to Investigate Chemicals in Foods, Cosmetics and Fertilizers — known as the Delaney Committee — has been exploring this possibility. Its findings, conveyed in a series of lively split reports released last August, are not wholly reassuring.

The Committee found the crux of the problem to be what it has

always been in our pressure-group society: that of protecting and utilizing, in the public interest, the integrity and competence of our scientists and technicians.

Wheels turn, lights burn, potable water flows from the spigot, the earth yields its harvests, and you eat with confidence what the grocer's boy delivers to your table only because hundreds of thousands of scientists and technicians are free to perform their duties honorably and faithfully.

Whenever that freedom is taken away, disaster impends. When Stalin liquidated the great Russian geneticist Vavilov and in his place enthroned the quack Lysenko, the science of genetics died behind the Iron Curtain, Soviet agriculture was endangered, and the Achilles heel of totalitarianism was revealed.

Our strength is that we do not liquidate our Vavilovs and enthrone our Lysenkos. Our weakness is that we do not give our Vavilovs, in

James Rorty is well known as a scientific writer for many national magazines on food, nutrition, and human ecology.

questions where the public interest is vitally involved, authority and public support commensurate with their responsibilities.

THE MOST DISTURBING findings of the Delaney Committee have to do with the stampede of American cities into water-fluoridation, as a means of reducing the incidence of tooth decay in children. Over three hundred American municipalities have fluoridated already or decided to fluoridate their water supplies; this despite the fact that the United States Public Health Service's ten-year comparative study of the cities of Newburgh, New York (fluoridated), and Kingston, New York (not fluoridated), still has three years to run and five before their results can become known. The Committee thinks these communities, with the encouragement of the U. S. Public Health Service, may have acted prematurely. It found unanimously that "a sufficient number of unanswered questions concerning the safety of this program exists as to warrant a conservative attitude."

Meanwhile, the Committee recommended the topical application of fluorides to children's teeth, pending the determination beyond a reasonable doubt that no part of the population would be endangered by drinking fluoridated water. In a supplementary finding Dr. A. L. Miller, one of the two medical

members of the committee and former director of the State of Nebraska's Department of Health, went considerably further, saying:

In my opinion the United States Public Health Service has been premature in urging universal use of fluorides in water. They have gone beyond the scope of their duties . . . without knowing the results of experiments that are now in progress.

The Public Health Service should concern itself with good public health measures and the prevention of disease. If it goes into the propaganda field it will lose its effectiveness and the confidence of the public. . . . I am convinced that further experiments should be carried on to ascertain what effects fluorides may have upon the child who is ill or upon the adult who has a chronic illness. These experiments are now in progress. . . . Many of the groups who now endorse fluorides are merely parroting each other's opinions. . . . Communities that desire to add fluorides to water should, in justice to their people, give them complete information. Where communities have had an opportunity to vote upon the question it is generally rejected.

In the same statement Dr. Miller pointed out that despite much propaganda to the contrary, the American Medical Association has *not* given its unqualified approval to fluoridation, and that the dental and nutritional professions are by no means unanimous in support of it.

The dissenters — they are numerous and distinguished — do not question that as a general rule children who drink water containing one part per million of fluorine from birth until the age of eight or nine, while the teeth are being formed, will have fewer tooth cavities than children drinking no fluoridated water. They do question the over-all safety, effectiveness, and economy of the program. Only one out of eight persons would be benefited, and these benefits can readily be obtained by other proven methods that do not force everybody to take the “calculated risk” that is involved in fluoridation.

As Dr. Miller points out, fluorine is not the only factor controlling the incidence of tooth decay; the amount of carbohydrates (especially candy and soft drinks) consumed by the child is perhaps of more importance. Parents who believe, despite solid evidence to the contrary, that their children can have their sweets and keep their teeth too, can administer fluorine in tablet form, or in drops in their milk. Better still, they can get the caries-preventing benefits of fluorine without its toxic hazards by having the dentist paint their children’s teeth with it.

One of those who questions fluoridation’s wisdom at this time is Dr. Robert S. Harris, Director of the Nutritional Biochemistry Laboratories at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Harris listed

nineteen unanswered questions which he believed must be answered before it is possible to determine the amount of risk involved in adding fluorine, a highly toxic element, to municipal water supplies. Said Dr. Harris: “There is plenty of evidence to indicate that fluorine in this amount (one part per million) or slightly more interferes with enzyme systems, and these enzyme systems are involved in the growth of bones, in the functioning of nerve tissue, and so forth and it is difficult by population surveys to get any precise evidence on this question.”

THE IDEA of adding fluorine to drinking water as a public health measure was given impetus by the discovery, over a decade ago, that the population of Deaf Smith County, Texas, had almost no tooth decay, and that the soil water in that part of Texas contains from one to three parts per million of fluorine. But from the beginning it was doubted that the fluorine in the water drunk by Deaf Smith County residents was the sole or even the chief reason for their healthy teeth. Dr. Harris’s own experiments have served to deepen this doubt. He fed one group of hamsters milk and corn from Texas, and another milk and corn from New England, where the incidence of caries is highest. The hamsters fed the Texas food had only forty per cent as much tooth decay as those fed the New England food,

but the amount of fluorine in the Texas food was too low to have produced any measurable effect on dental caries.

Further experience convinced Dr. Harris that riboflavin, a vitamin nutrient without any toxicity, is about as effective in preventing caries in hamsters as fluorine. One of the best natural sources of riboflavin is milk.

Another distinguished biochemist, Dr. E. B. Hart, Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Wisconsin, testified that he was a member of a committee appointed to study a proposal to fluoridate the water supply of Madison, Wisconsin. The committee, which consisted of a bacteriologist, a chemical engineer, two biochemists, two nutritionists, two dentists, a pediatrician, a pathologist, two doctors, and a layman, voted unanimously to advise the Mayor and the city council *not* to proceed with fluoridation. "However," concluded Dr. Hart wryly, "enthusiastic dentists outside our committee prevailed upon the council to authorize fluoridation, so today that is what we have."

Dr. Hart pointed out that the pilot fluoridation experiments in Newburgh, New York, Evanston, Illinois, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, will not yield data on the effect of fluoridation on adults, as only children are being examined; also, that no one knows or can determine the chemical composition of the

fluorine salts in fluoridated water because of the complex chemical reactions occurring in the soil water. Hence it cannot be concluded that because fluoridation in one area reduces tooth decay it will have a similar effect in another area.

The American Dental Association has endorsed the fluoridation program. But Dr. Veikko Oscar Hurme, clinical research director of the Forsyth Dental Infirmary of Boston, is strongly opposed. Dr. Hurme told the Delaney Committee that fluoridation was neither a public health measure nor a preventive procedure; that it was mass medicine, undertaken without anything approaching adequate knowledge of fluorine toxicosis, or the widely varying fluorine tolerance of young and old, healthy and ill people; that fluorine had never been proved to be indispensable for the maintenance of a healthy body or healthy teeth — on the contrary, some of the highest life expectancies are reported from regions of the globe with the least fluorine in the water; that the claims for the reduction of caries in the communities now fluoridating their water supplies varied so widely — from 20 to 65 per cent — as to call into question the methods and the objectivity of the examiners.

In conclusion, Dr. Hurme declared flatly that the fluoridation program is premature, and that instead of having the program "wished on them" without adequate

public discussion, as had happened in Evanston, Illinois, and elsewhere, communities contemplating fluoridating their water supplies should begin by setting up their own local control studies. Such local studies he believes are necessary because of significant variations in heat, humidity, the chemicals in the natural water supplies in the area, and the food supplies.

But if fluoridation is as premature as all that, how did it happen to get the unqualified endorsement of the United States Public Health Service, the American Dental Association, and the American Public Health Association, as well as the qualified approval of the American Medical Association?

The answer, seemingly, is that the program is easy to administer and inexpensive — less than ten cents per capita per year. Moreover, its apparent benefits, in terms of a major reduction of tooth decay, are easy to demonstrate statistically, whereas its hazards, as yet, are largely hypothetical, although they may turn out to be all too real.

IN ITS REPORT on the fluoridation of water supplies the Delaney Committee managed to preserve a united front, although the go-slow recommendation of the majority was not strong enough to satisfy Dr. Miller. But when it came to chemicals in food, the Committee split wide open. The majority re-

port, signed by Delaney of New York, Hedrick of West Virginia, Jones of Missouri, Miller of Nebraska, and McDonough of California, recommended amending the present Food and Drug Act by empowering the Food and Drug Administration to pre-test and approve new chemicals in foods, as it now does drugs. Again, the majority report did not go far enough to satisfy Dr. Miller, who submitted additional views, with which Congressman McDonough associated himself. To balance this, Congressmen Abernethy of Mississippi and Horan of Washington in a minority report characterized the majority's findings as "alarmist," and denied the need of amending the present law. The two opposition congressmen objected specifically to the majority's views on chemical emulsifiers in bread and other processed food; on stilbestrol, an estrogenic hormone used to fatten chickens and other meat animals; and on D.D.T., chlordane, and other toxic insecticides. But is there in fact cause for alarm in the present use being made of these chemical substances?

Some ten million pounds a year of synthetic food emulsifiers, or "softeners," are now being used in bread, baked goods, ice cream, and other foods, although the question of their safety for human consumption remains unsettled. To determine the extent to which the nutritionally

worthless "softeners" are being used as substitutes for safe and nutritionally valuable natural food elements, the Committee made its own investigation, by way of a check on a previous study by the Food and Drug Administration. It found that the bakers who had *not* adopted the softeners (of the polyoxyethylen type) used 41 per cent more natural shortening and 38 per cent more milk solids than those who had. Where the Food and Drug Administration's survey found an average of 4.8 per cent of shortening in its sample, the Committee found an average of 2.79 per cent.

This is the second time within a year that a congressional investigating committee has had to call the F.D.A. to account. In August, 1951, the Gillette Committee on the Utilization of Farm Crops recommended a congressional investigation of both the Food and Drug law and its administration. It also recommended amendment of the law to provide for open formula (quantitative) labeling of the ingredients going into bread and rolls, and to forbid the use of non-nutritive elements in bread or other food products unless their addition serves some useful purpose to the consumer.

THE SYNTHETIC ESTROGEN known as stilbestrol, second bone of contention in the Delaney Committee, made the front page three years ago when a group of mink

farmers complained to the Department of Agriculture that as a result of feeding these notoriously fertile animals the necks and heads of stilbestrol-treated "caponettes," their mink stopped breeding. Since the U.S.D.A. experts had approved and recommended the use of stilbestrol to fatten fowls and other meat animals, the mink growers demanded that their damages be made good. A bill to compensate them is now before Congress.

When disaster hit the mink colonies, the Canadian health authorities immediately conducted experiments with human beings. Women who had passed the menopause began to menstruate again after eating the livers of stilbestrol-treated fowl; whereupon Canada promptly banned the use of stilbestrol.

Yet despite these findings our own Department of Agriculture continued to encourage the use of the hormone by poultry growers; thirty million chickens were treated with stilbestrol pellets last year. By this time the "caponette" you buy in the market or eat at a restaurant is rather likely to be stilbestrol-fattened, unless you are otherwise informed, and at present you are *not* informed.

Witnesses told the Delaney Committee that the estrogen, in sufficient quantity, can depress the growth of children, lead to sterility in men, cause cystic ovaries, cystic breasts, cystic kidneys, and suppress

ovulation. Recent experiments with minute doses indicate the danger that the same conditions may be caused by the ingestion of small doses over a long period.

The hazard is increased by the known carelessness of the poultry farmers; they are likely to implant the stilbestrol pellet almost anywhere, so that the consumer may eat not just the stilbestrol deposited in the meat, fat, and organs — especially the liver, where it is concentrated — but the unabsorbed pellet itself. In 1951 F.D.A. inspectors confiscated 50,000 pounds of chickens which had been improperly treated with stilbestrol.

Apart from the health hazard involved, the practice is an economic fraud. The fat of the treated fowl is watery and inferior culinarily. The flesh is tenderer but less palatable. Dr. Carl G. Hartman, the veteran chemist who introduced the use of the stilbestrol pellet in this country, startled the Committee by declaring with great earnestness that he now recommended banning its use. He was joined in this recommendation by Dr. Robert K. Enders of Swarthmore, who concluded his testimony as follows:

Because of proof that enough of the drug to cause changes in the reproductive tract of the human being can be ingested by eating treated chicken, because of the danger of having so powerful a drug so easily available, because of the economic

loss to the consumer who pays protein prices for contaminated fat, I believe that it is against the interest to use any hormone or hormone-like drug in the fattening of animals. If this practice becomes widespread we may be able to paraphrase and say, "the vegetarians will inherit the earth."

Impressed by this testimony, the majority of the Delaney Committee recommended that the meat or poultry or other food which has been treated with estrogens be so labelled, and that the restaurants serving such estrogen-treated food be required to advise customers of the fact. Again Congressmen Abernethy and Horan dissented, while Congressmen McDonough and Dr. Miller went further, urging that "additional experiments need to be done before the green light is given to the widespread use of these estrogen hormones."

WILL the vegetarians inherit the earth, as Dr. Enders suggested, or will it be the bugs? The findings of the Delaney Committee on the dangers inherent in the use of the new, highly toxic insecticides would indicate that on the whole the bugs have the better chance.

The hearings revealed what might be characterized, without exaggeration, as a serious crisis of the ecology, using the word in the sense of "this sorry scheme of things entire."

To supply the world's increasing

demand for food, farmers must use stronger and stronger insecticides, against which the insect pests develop stronger and stronger resistances, until they become immune to the poisons that once destroyed them; whereupon the insecticide manufacturers introduce still more lethal poisons that again roll back the offensive of the plant parasites. But not for long. Sometimes the new spray or dust inadvertently gives the bug enemy a break: it destroys the predator of a once-harmless insect which suddenly becomes a towering menace — at which anguished appeals for help roll in on the Experiment Stations and the U.S.D.A.'s Bureau of Plant Industry.

At this point the spreading ecological tizzy is likely to jump the imaginary gap that separates the natural from the social sciences — after all, most of the world's landscapes are now human landscapes — and become an issue in our pressure politics.

For too often there is an unfortunate drawback to the new insecticide that is promptly developed to knock out the new pest, whose predator was inadvertently knocked out by the older pesticide, now discarded. The drawback is that the new wonder chemical, which again enables the farmer to raise a bumper crop for the government to buy at support prices and dump, does more than knock out the bugs.

It also knocks out human beings.

Or it *may* do so *if* the insecticide manufacturer has not conducted adequate (which means lifetime) toxicological tests before introducing his product; or *if* the farmer does not follow directions for use and removal of the residue; or *if* the food processor is unscrupulous; or *if* the housewife is careless about washing fruits and vegetables before preparing them for the table.

THE MAJORITY REPORT of the Delaney Committee recommended these risks be minimized by authorizing the Food and Drug Administration to pre-test and approve new insecticides before they are introduced. In support of this recommendation it cited testimony given at the hearings regarding D.D.T., chlordane, selenium, the phenylmercury compounds and benzene hexachloride.

D.D.T. was carried over to agriculture from its wartime use as a typhus and malaria preventive, where the danger of injury to troops was considered less than the danger from such scourges. But the evidence was soon clear that cows sprayed with D.D.T., or fed silage sprayed with it, can secrete it in the butterfat of their milk in dangerous amounts. The committee on pesticides of the American Medical Association reported that chronic poisoning may result from the ingestion of small amounts of D.D.T.

over a long time, and the safe tolerance level is still unknown.

The F.D.A.'s expert testified that chlordane is four to five times as toxic as D.D.T.; that he would hesitate to eat food that had any chlordane residue on it whatever; that it should not even be used as a household spray or in floor waxes. Yet it is still being used extensively, and while the hearings were in progress a U.S.D.A. bulletin was still recommending it for treating grain storage bins. Similar lags between scientific findings and the issuance of appropriate warnings by U.S.D.A. agencies were noted frequently in the record of hearings.

For years the F.D.A. has urged the banning of selenium sprays, which penetrate the skins of fruit, and build up, as do D.D.T. and chlordane, dangerous residues in the soil. Three parts per million of selenium cause cirrhosis of the liver in rats. But when D.D.T. came in it destroyed not only insects, but also the predators of mites, so there followed a boom in the use of selenium, which is an efficient miticide; this, regardless of the consequences to the fruit consumer.

The discontinuance of the phenylmercury fungicides has also been urged by competent experts, since very small quantities can damage the kidney.

In most of these ecological dilemmas, the ultimate consumer figures as the potential victim. But in

the case of benzene hexachloride both farmers and canners have suffered heavy losses of money, which talks louder than health. The chemical penetrates the edible portions of crops causing off flavors; it also accumulates in the soil, so that the same off flavors appear when new and different crops are grown on it. A representative of the Beechnut Packing Company testified that his company was currently obliged to spend over \$100,000 a year to keep pesticidal residues — D.D.T., chlordane, benzene hexachloride and others — out of its food products, especially its baby foods. Significantly, Beechnut and other food processors who find themselves trapped at the same point in the ecological web, endorse the idea of granting pre-testing authority to the F.D.A.; obviously it would save them money and relieve them of some degree of responsibility.

TO LIVE at all in our technological civilization is to live dangerously. We cannot wholly avoid the risk of sudden death on the highway or slow poison at the dinner table. But we can and should be able both to calculate these risks and to minimize them.

The fact is that we are not at present able even to calculate the risk represented by chemicals in foods, let alone minimize it.

Once during the Delaney Committee's hearings the attempt was

made to submit major issues to scientific arbitrament. It collapsed completely.

Soon after the Delaney Committee was appointed, the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council set up a Food Protection Committee, headed by Dr. Herbert Longnecker, of the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Longnecker and the members of his Food Protection Committee are nutritionists of high standing. Unfortunately, however, the National Research Council enjoys no public subsidy. Its food committees are therefore obliged to turn to the food industry, or to industry-supported foundations, for the financial support of their work, as did Dr. Longnecker on this occasion. This compromises their independence, as the committees are called on constantly to adjudicate scientific controversies in which their patrons have a financial interest.

In June of 1951, after many months of study, the Food Protection Committee issued a "Not for Publication" report on the bread emulsifiers referred to earlier. The report declared that "the scientific evidence at present available in regard to mono-and di-glycerides as well as the so-called poly compounds is insufficient to justify their use in foods. . . ."

Surprise! The report startled the industry and rebuked the cynics. The committee had even dared to

take issue with the Food and Drug Administration, whose official bread standards permit the use of mono- and di-glycerides, produced from vegetable and animal oils, but ban the poly compounds, which are petroleum derivatives.

On August 8 the committee in effect committed hara-kiri by issuing a "For Publication" release which said that its previous statement "was not intended to question the continued use in foods of surface active materials that are permitted by existing or officially proposed standards. . . ."

In other words, the committee now sanctioned the use in foods of the mono- and di-glycerides, although by its own earlier unrepudiated statement there was insufficient scientific evidence to justify their use in foods, or at least if there were such evidence, the committee cited none.

PRESSURE-GROUP GOVERNMENT works only to the extent that ultimately we are *all* represented by a pressure-proof umpire with competence and authority to arbitrate and decide controversies in the public interest.

In dealing with ecological crises precipitated by the insecticide industry, and with the staggering multiplication of chemicals used in food, Congress has authority but lacks scientific and technical competence; but for the latter it is dependent upon scientists and ad-

ministrators in and out of government, who, as we have seen, are pressured intolerably.

Is there any solution to this dilemma? A member of the Delaney Committee posed the question during the 1950 hearings to Dr. Robert S. Harris, of M.I.T., whose testimony on the fluoridation controversy was quoted earlier. In answer, Dr. Harris proposed the British solution, which is the British Medical Council, appointed and paid by the British government. That body, as Dr. Harris pointed out,

is a group of the best people who have left completely their private employ and are serving as a medical council. They are free from all pressures in theory. They are like a supreme court. And they are able to expend their entire time on these questions and come to a combined judgment.

That, or something like it, in the opinion of this writer, has been the obvious solution for many years. Britain and her dominions have re-

peatedly made sense in their handling of food and public health problems; we have repeatedly made dangerous, pressure-dictated nonsense.

The Delaney Committee has posed and illustrated the problem without solving it. For the proposed enlargement of the present Food and Drug Administration's authority would scarcely be an adequate solution, even if a recalcitrant chemical industry would accept such an expansion of Oscar Ewing's already top-heavy Federal Security empire.

Unquestionably, we need a complete rewriting of the present ill-conceived and emasculated Food and Drug law. But first, it would seem, we need an effort by a committee of independent scientists, along the lines of the Hoover Commission's report, an effort directed specifically at the problem of liberating from all pressure and utilizing, in the public interest, one of our most critical resources: the competence and integrity of our best scientific brains.

Safety and Silence

» Nothing can ruin a country if the people themselves undertake its safety; nothing can save it if they leave that safety in any hands but their own.

DANIEL WEBSTER

» To sin by silence when they should protest, makes cowards of men.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Canned features, hand-outs, and organized laziness, says a young newspaperman, have turned our daily press into . . .

Newspapers *WITHOUT* News

Anthony Harrigan

IT is the constant boast of American newspapers that there is a free press in the United States. And, admittedly, despite considerable ranting, not even Harry S. Truman is likely to seize the plants of our newspapers. No American need fear that the New York *Herald Tribune* or the Kansas City *Star* will, because of their support of General Eisenhower, suffer the fate of Argentina's *La Prensa*. Thus in the ordinary sense the press in the United States is free.

Nevertheless, in a larger sense, the press is not free, for it is under a thrall of its own creation. It possesses freedom, but does not exercise it. The American press does not use the resources of freedom, takes

no advantage of a priceless opportunity to be, not the voice of the people (newspapers never are that), but the voice of strong and thoughtful individuals. The hundreds of medium-sized dailies in the land are without conviction and without distinction. Only a handful of large newspapers are responsible and serious. They stand apart and they stand for something. They are of a vanishing breed.

In this country, where there is neither an established church nor a trained upper class, the chief directing and enlightening force is the press. The press in our history has played a powerful role. Whether in colonial Virginia or Virginia City on the frontier, it was no respecter of persons, or of the politicians whom one great southern editor dubbed the "Office-holding Industry." The press has been a bulwark against lying and corruption.

Americans, from garbage man to bank president, "keep up with the

Anthony Harrigan, formerly a staff member of the Charleston, S. C., News and Courier, is at present editing the papers of W. W. Ball, for many years editor of the Courier, and working on a symposium called As America Sees It.

newspapers." Reading the newspapers is a national habit. And the press is highly regarded. It is a stock reply to say "I read it in the papers." It is democratic scripture. For the press is not venal. American newspapers cannot be bribed and bought by political factions. If the owners do not always have firm principles, they do possess solid and deep-seated prejudices. Because most American newspapers enjoy the confidence of the people, it is all the more tragic that they are partly enslaved to frivolity and irresponsibility.

Newspapers are immense corporate properties with huge and complicated mechanical plants. They create a bustle, a stir; their front pages carry headlines in exceedingly large type faces, headlines blaring forth the pettiness as well as the turbulence of the modern world. Yet behind this façade little genuine newspaper work goes on.

I refer here to the mechanization, standardization, and syndication of material prepared for the pages of newspapers so called. The press in this country is not using any large portion of its available resources in seeking the news or presenting the meaning of the news. It is making no effort to bring the best to the public, nor is it training a new generation of serious journalists. The former is too expensive, it has decided, and the latter too difficult.

To be sure, night and day, year in and year out, the wire services,

AP, UP, and INS, carry millions of words of copy purporting to report the full story of the day's happenings everywhere in the world. But what are these words about? A cat climbs on the weather vane above a steeple in a Nebraska village. A Frenchman in Paris constructs a five-wheeled motorcycle. An East African river is given a new name. These inconsequential events and countless others like them are reported over the wires of the press associations, and then the meaningless stories appear in the morning and afternoon papers across the land.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED to our newspapers has been a long time in the making. The evil that the yellow journalists did in their lifetime lives after them. The press associations and wire services have monopolized the distribution of news; they are depended on for virtually everything. Speed in the distribution of news is good. But so is completeness, understanding, and analysis. The arrangement for bartering news that is the heart of the Associated Press idea has become an excuse for laziness. It is planned laziness. It has made the laziness of the medium-sized American newspapers economically wise. The "scoop," boldness of any kind, independent judgment, these are now of lesser importance to newspapers. The wire services insist that they are not partisan. Hence managing

editors need not fear that a single partisan idea will creep into their pages and offend a single reader or organized group. And the management of newspapers are far more concerned about losing that one reader than they are to win a flock of new readers who have some appreciation of forthright reporting.

American life today is ridden with taboos. Democracy is interpreted as meaning that you can't say anything that will hurt anyone's feelings. Ideas are not especially welcome, nor is originality, nor force of expression. Wrongdoers are referred to in the abstract. It is always the "five per centers," or the White House "palace guard," or the "bureaucrats," or the "deep freeze gang." Newspapers are increasingly reluctant to name names or point a finger; it is somehow in bad taste. In brief, the newspapers are reluctant to step on toes. So the dispatches filed with the wire services are cleaned, smoothed over, blunted. They are emasculated and watered down, their content removed or altered out of recognition.

This trite, this emasculated, this watered-down thing termed news is carried at the speed of light to hundreds of dailies. Cut up like pie, marked with guide lines, given a head, it is fitted in among the recipes, dress patterns, medical advice, gossip columns, Washington cocktail party talk, "human interest" stories, Dorothy Dix ad-

vice, and Walter Lippmann lucubration — and called news. Except for the articles written by the reporters on the police and city hall beats, this is all the news our newspapers carry.

MECCHANIZATION, standardization, and syndication are not the only blighting influence on the modern newspaper. Totalitarian countries have the government censor — we have the federal public relations handout. Indeed, totalitarian countries have something to learn from our federal government about the techniques of suppressing news. Certainly, there is no more effective censorship device than the handout — that "explanatory" news release whose gobbledygook means all things and nothing. In addition, there is the calculated "leak" of puzzling information and the "off-the-record disclosure" that bedevil and confuse the reporter, and blind him as to what he is honor bound to report and what he is honor bound to keep secret. What dictatorial governments achieve with blue pencil and scissors, the federal government in the United States achieves with its barrage of handouts, reports, conferences, bulletins, and brochures. There is a vast publicity apparatus working for every government department and ranking official. Pressure groups, unions, management groups have their public relations offices. All these let loose such a

flood of publicity that the newspapers are swept along on it without making any serious attempt to get to the rock bottom of public issues. Investigations are inconclusive. Public attention skips here, there, and everywhere. Instead of latching onto and staying with the few important issues, newspapers prefer a variety of tidbit and scandal. The wire services want a stream of live stories, more and more grist for the mill. The slow catching hold, the hauling in of a big fish, takes time. And the wire services and the newspapers haven't the patience or the interest or the responsibility to wait for the big story to develop and mature.

Is there anything that can be done to improve things?

Obviously, it is not possible to persuade the prelates of the Associated Press and other news-gathering and distributing organizations that their creation needs to be overhauled and kept within bounds. The newspapers are doing well, they are making money. And the majority of newspapers know no other test of achievement than the financial one. The associations and newspaper managements are satisfied. They listen to no other advice than their own; they read nothing but their own pronouncements. In such an atmosphere, reform or innovation at first seems impossible.

However, newspapers have it within their means to re-establish the

dignity and power and freedom of the press. The program is simple enough, but immensely difficult to put across to the management of newspapers, because it means spending money. It requires talent, and talent costs money in this country, although there is enough talent in the United States for many great newspapers, and not only for a handful. Individual journalism will never become a thing of the past. The material for a revival of a distinctive and trenchant journalism is in the city rooms of newspapers, waiting for the green light and the necessary greenbacks.

What is essential is that the medium-sized dailies engage staffers who will search out the news on their own, in a more ruthless and far-ranging fashion. Rather than depend on the wire services for their coverage of Washington, the medium-sized dailies ought to maintain at least one good staffer and researcher for the capitol scene.

Representation in Washington or New York or Chicago or Los Angeles of course costs money. To send one man to cover a national convention for a week, let alone maintain a good staffer or staffer-research team in one of our major cities, is an undertaking impossible on a shoe-string editorial budget. Unfortunately, the editorial side has little of its old importance in relation to the total operation of publishing a newspaper. In many newspapers the

"big wheels" are the business office chiefs; the editorial workers are little heeded. Petty financial limitations are imposed upon the editorial department, its picture or travel budget is narrowly restricted, so that oftentimes excellent locally written features are not carried because for a trifling sum a passable "canned" feature can be got from a feature syndicate. The business office wants to "get by"; it is not interested in maintaining or raising journalistic standards.

DESPITE the fanfare and the pronouncements concerning a free press, it is evident that the medium-sized newspapers in America have abdicated responsibility in the gathering of national news. And the same thing is now taking place in regard to local news. News staffs are not digging and investigating. They are relying on handouts, accepting the statements of public officials as to what takes place in closed meetings, tolerating the exclusion of the press from the sessions of local governmental bodies, and growing used to accepting news at second hand.

Anyone acquainted with the workings of a modern newspaper realizes, if he is at all acute, that the newspaper management, the business office, is bringing about a withdrawal of the paper from the news field. To a greater and greater extent the newspapers are engaged

in peddling. They continue to carry a dummy front of news and editorials because it is a convention fixed in the public mind. But the trend is to frivolity, to a competition in frivolity, and pages are pasted together with "canned" food or clothing features in order to lend background to supermarket or clothing store ads.

This is a great loss to the country because newspapers provide, ideally, the sole inexpensive source of information and comment on public affairs. The newspaper constitutes the only post-graduate school the ordinary man and woman have the money and time to attend — the day-to-day school in which current events are unfolded and analyzed. The newspaper is *the* institution in the republic by which educated men and women can pass along their understanding of events to their fellow-citizens. Instead, the management of the typical modern newspaper patronizes its readers, contemptuously feeds them pap, calls *them* stupid to excuse *its* incompetence.

The rock upon which a powerful newspaper is built is a body of faithful readers who trust and value its word, who believe in its integrity. They constitute a newspaper's life. Nevertheless, our pinchpenny, "newsless" newspapers are surrendering this great asset. They do so in a misguided attempt to make money. Our newspapers are directed

by men who are not newspapermen. They are directed by men who have come into the field from business life, and do not understand the history of the press in the English-speaking world, its role and significance, the springs of its greatness. For newspapers are not shoe factories or soft drink concerns. Our

press will thrive, newspapers will sell, circulation will rise, when newspapers return to the old policy of reporting news with intelligence and courage. Not dress patterns but politics is the subject matter of the press. In sound reporting and strong editorials are the praise and the profits.

One is Enough

» And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter — we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea.

HENRY D. THOREAU, in *"Where I Lived, and What I Live For,"* 1854.

FILM

William Barrett

Chaplin as Chaplin

Death of a Clown

CHAPLIN'S NEW FILM *Limelight* is one of the most perplexing works of art I have ever experienced. The perplexity seems to originate in the character of Chaplin himself, for he is the real subject of the movie, and while this character is almost hypnotic in its fascination, there remains something unexpressed and mysterious about it. One comes away haunted by the feeling of Chaplin the man, which saturates almost every foot of the film, but one doesn't have any very definite idea as to how much of the real personality is conveyed and how much held back. The intentions of the film seem to be in part frankly autobiographical: here is Chaplin returned to his origins in

the London Music Halls; yet when we have come to the end of the autobiography, the real character of the man remains a sealed book.

Why, for example, should Chaplin — rich, famous, and still the unparalleled master of his art — project himself as Calvero, a broken-down and impoverished comedian? Why should the ideas of death and failure loom so large? What is there in Chaplin's own life that should bring out such bits of lament and bitterness here and there in the film?

These are some of the puzzling questions the movie left with me, but before going on to unravel the perplexity a little, I should say, on the positive side, that I also found this the most powerful of Chaplin's films. Not the best, for it is uneven and in certain stretches drags badly; and certainly not the

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funniest, for until ten minutes of priceless comedy toward the end, there is almost nothing to laugh at. But it is the most powerful because of the uncanny and haunting depth of feeling it leaves with one. And this feeling is due in good part to the fact that here, more than in any of his other pictures, Charles Chaplin has come the closest to playing Charles Chaplin. But he still has to hide behind the mask of the clown, and the movie leaves one with the baffling wonder what it would be like if the mask came down altogether and Chaplin played himself straight. Could he really do it, one wonders. Could he really divest himself completely of the figure of the clown that made him world-famous and became, in a sense, his life? And what would Chaplin really say if he were directly speaking out his own mind on life, instead of inserting little tags of wisdom here and there supposedly out of the mouth of Calvero?

Part of the puzzling nature of the movie is also due to Chaplin's own ambitions as a movie-maker. We have long since got used to Chaplin as the writer, director, and producer of his own movies; but here his ambitions are even more operatic: he composes the score, including a concerto, supervises the ballet, and even deals out a bit of philosophy and psychoanalysis. Not since the days when Richard Wagner

flourished as musician, dramatist, and philosopher has such a display of universal genius been attempted. But Wagner had the power of his music to carry off all his other lapses, while the question Chaplin raises is whether the motion picture is a major enough form of art to carry all the meanings he would try to pour into it. Chaplin is a genius, the one indubitable genius that the movies have produced. But the paradoxical quality of this genius is that it cannot contain itself in the comic form in which it came to birth, but must spill itself all over the lot trying to express something that is altogether beyond comedy.

CHAPLIN BEGAN, after all, as a popular artist. In the form of popular art, his tramp clown became a kind of symbol to millions of people all over the world. But the things it was symbolic of still had the simplicity of popular art. Now, however, he has become a "serious" artist, embarked upon the forms of high art; and between high art and popular art there is the great gulf as between human complexity and human simplicity. *Limelight* almost certainly will not be good box office: it moves too slow for the ordinary movie-goer, and its really heartrending quality, which might move a sentimental audience to tears, demands a preparation in Chaplin's other films — something we can't assume from present audi-

ences, so fast have the times changed. But Chaplin seems to be beyond caring for box office. He did this movie because there was something he felt compelled to express, not because he merely wanted to entertain people. In certain places indeed he is so obsessed with what he has to say that the film stands still, and one rubs one's eyes wondering can Chaplin really have lost the cinematic touch or should he not actually have chosen to write a play instead of a movie. Most of the time, however, he is Chaplin, who cannot help being entertaining so long as he stands in front of a camera, but the idea of entertainment seems always secondary to the expression of the serious theme.

This story of Chaplin's evolving ambition as an artist, and how it broke the confines of his art, probably begins a long way back. But the process is first clearly discernible in *Modern Times*, which is very much of a comedy, to be sure, but at the same time a serious satire on the mechanization of man that takes place in modern society. That movie was still an artistic whole: Chaplin did not have to step out of the role of the tramp in order to make his serious theme clear. In *The Great Dictator*, however, the two ingredients did not quite gel: the little barber in the movie was the old Chaplin, but Hitler was really too monstrous a figure to be the subject of clowning. After at-

tacking Totalitarianism, Chaplin went on to demolish Capitalism, in a rather roundabout and eerie fashion, in *Monsieur Verdoux*, where the comedy became grotesque when it dealt with the cold-blooded slaughter of women. But if in these films Chaplin was seriously speaking his mind on major social problems, he has in the present movie gone far beyond that, into regions much more philosophical and universal: here his themes are nothing less than old age, failure, death, the supplanting of the old by the young, the unkillable fantasies of human beings along with their desperate desire for truth — or, as the dying Calvero expresses it in one phrase, "the mystery of the human mind and heart." This is a tall order for any artist, even one as great as Chaplin, and it is no wonder that when the last foot of film fades out, one should still be left wondering where in this immense subject matter the artist really intended to stake out his claim.

CHAPLIN spent three years writing the scenario of *Limelight*, yet the plot is so simple, and even traditional, in outline that it would hardly seem to have required all that time to contrive. The scene is London before World War I (the time and place when Chaplin first broke into the limelight). The hero, Calvero (Chaplin), is a once great music hall comedian who is now

on the downgrade, having lost contact with his audiences, and finds it difficult to get bookings. He has had trouble with theatrical managers because of his heavy drinking, and as the movie opens he is in fact very drunk, returning to his rooming house in the morning. He smells gas from a room, breaks in, and rescues the young girl Terry (Claire Bloom) from an attempted suicide. He nurses her back to health, restores her confidence in herself, and she goes on to become a star in the ballet. A very warm but strange relation has sprung up between them: Terry believes she is in love with Calvero, but he is convinced that it is only her compassion for an old man. She has been in love before, though only at a distance, with a young musician, and Calvero is tormented by the thought that time is remorseless and he, the old man, can never be to this girl what the young man is. Moreover, now that she is a star he is all the more desperate about his own failure as a comedian, and he finally disappears from her life to become a street musician. An impresario comes upon him while he is passing the hat, decides that something must be done for the once great Calvero, and decides to hold a great all-star benefit performance for the down-and-out comedian. Calvero performs at the benefit and is a tremendous hit, showing once again to his audience that he has not lost a bit of his

genius. At the moment of his vindication, however, he suffers a heart attack and dies.

Such is the plot, and though the tradition of the suffering and tragic clown has become something of a cliché by this time, it is not at all a cliché in Chaplin's hands, principally because he has made this stock character the vehicle for his own complex and rich personality. The other reason is the absolute and loving care with which he has attended to each detail that makes up this simple story. Sometimes the care is a little too static, as when, in the early parts of the picture, the camera freezes, from almost every conceivable angle, upon Claire Bloom's lovely face. (She is in fact one of the most beautiful heroines to come into motion pictures lately, and it is a tribute to Chaplin's sharp eye as a director that he should have cast her for the part.) The early section of the picture, in which Calvero is nursing the young girl back to health, is indeed as static as a photographed play: Chaplin stops the action while he expounds a philosophy of the value of human life and human consciousness. Yet, in the midst of these philosophic bromides, every once in a while a very pointed or poignant remark is flung out as if from Chaplin himself, as when he tells the girl that it is perfectly all right for her to stay in his apartment since he has had five marriages and is now ready at

last for a really platonic relationship. Moreover, this static first half of the picture gradually establishes its weight in relation to what follows, and I for one now feel that a good deal of my disappointment with the first part came from my expectantly waiting for it to be funny along the lines of the old Chaplin movies.

Chaplin, for reasons of deliberate artistry, refuses to be funny in the old fashion. He has to suggest the idea that Calvero, as a comedian, has lost contact with his audience; and when Calvero does a routine on the stage as master of a flea circus and his audience walks out on him, it would hardly be appropriate for the audience of Chaplin's film to be roaring with laughter at the skit which leaves the audience in the film apathetic. Chaplin's mastery in this touch is just another sign that he can calculate and establish almost any effect he wishes. And at the end, as Calvero is scoring a hit, Chaplin shows that he can be as funny as ever in the old way in a marvelous routine with Buster Keaton. This is supposed to be a violin solo, with Keaton as his accompanist: Keaton's music keeps tumbling down from the piano rack, and Chaplin's shoe disappearing into his trousers, and the two of them milk this simple gag for its last drop of laughter. When I saw it, this was the only boffo scored on the audience, and it was a terrific one. But

this is exactly as it should be, for the whole meaning of the picture would be destroyed if we were laughing throughout at Chaplin in the old way.

YET, with all this old mastery of single details and effects, the control of the larger intentions behind the whole work is not equally apparent. What is this "mystery of the human mind and heart" that Chaplin really wanted to get at? This brings us back to the personal question, since Chaplin's actual human personality is really the "mind and heart" of this work. One gets the impression of a great deal of suffering in this man that he is trying to give meaning to in the film. There is, for example, not only that barbed remark of Calvero about his five marriages, but at one point the comedian remarks bitterly about his addiction to the theater: that though he detests the sight of blood, he nevertheless has it in his veins.

But this bitterness at the theater, if it really exists, probably has a deep and very personal root in Chaplin himself. His genius lies in the motion picture, but his ambition exceeds this limitation and struggles with it. To express certain things about life, no movie — in spite of all the dazzling resources of camera and sound — can equal a book. How much of that unexpressed "mystery of the human mind and heart"

might Chaplin not have expressed if he had written directly about himself and his life in an autobiography? Yet if he sat down to write that book, he would probably find the genius of the old mime taking

possession of him again, forcing him into the old theatrical medium and into the character of the great aged comedian, whom, like Calvero in this movie, he now wishes to be dead.

Chaplin as Charlie

» Chaplin's art defies any complete explanation — which is only to say that Chaplin is a great artist. His comedy is as simple as hopscotch and as complicated as da Vinci. Perhaps the key to Chaplin's art is to be found in this forbidding paradoxical statement by the great German playwright Schiller: "Man is human in the full meaning of the word only when he plays, and it is only when he is fully human that he is able to play."

This paradox helps to explain the humane and liberating effect Chaplin's playing has on us. It also helps to explain Chaplin's failure: his falling off, in *The Great Dictator* and *Monsieur Verdoux*, from the high plane of play into "thinking," moralizing, preachment. . . .

When Chaplin gave up the character of "Charlie," he did so reluctantly. It was a symbol, with a life of its own, inspired in its simplicity; a fairy-tale figure dropped smack into the middle of the workaday world, so very human precisely because of its unreality.

The essence of the silent film was pantomime, and Chaplin was a consummate mime. But as soon as sound came in at the end of the twenties, motion pictures stopped being pantomime.

"Talkies?" Chaplin said in 1929, "You can say I detest them! They come to ruin the world's most ancient art, the art of pantomime. They annihilate the great beauty of silence."

FRIEDRICH LUFT, in *Der Monat*, Berlin, 1952.

ISAAC ROSENFELD

CONFESSIONS OF A WRITING TEACHER

*Why do . . . the people imagine a
vain thing? — PS. 2:1.*

DURING THE ENTIRE FOUR YEARS that I taught writing at a great eastern university, I had a guilty conscience because I felt obliged to hold back something from my students. Now I am free to speak, and glad to unburden myself of the following statement: *Writing courses are a waste of time and money for everyone concerned.*

It is a pity that so many hundreds of thousands of people want to be writers. Why they do I will never

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know. Writing is a thankless profession, a heartbreaking profession, a profession in which the disappointments are many and the rewards few. No doubt most people imagine a writer's life to be full of glamor, ease, and adventure. That it is nothing of the kind, I need not trouble to demonstrate. There exists the fairly widespread counter-myth, considerably nearer the truth, which features mountains of rejection slips and unpaid bills; and though his neighbors will often come upon the writer in daytime in silly or feigned (actually, resentful) surprise, "Don't you have to work for a living?" they know quite well, if they are even the least bit snoopy, that he works as hard as anyone and often has less to show for his labor than most of the middle class.

To be sure, there is a more so-

phisticated view of the writer, which few people hold. This view attributes to him, as it does to any artist, the good fortune of being able to support himself by doing what he wants to do. Unlike the mass of wage earners, he gets paid for being himself! I admit this is an enviable condition, but it is by no means easy, as it renders the compromises with life which the writer must make in areas other than his art so much the more distasteful and difficult to bear. Besides, it is a condition to which few people should aspire, as the prospect of being themselves, *with no external occupation, title, or rank to hide behind*, is precisely the one which fills most men with dread. But undoubtedly, the greatest number of illusions about writing are furnished by the desire for fame. This again is a mistake, as skill in any other field, such as athletics or crime, is bound to bring surer, and probably just as lasting, results. (Of writers like myself, who have published for the most part in advance-guard media, one must say, the fewer the people who know our work, the more famous we are.) The only man I can think of whose motive for writing is sound, is the one who cannot help it, who has to sit down and write.

WHATEVER THE REASON, nearly everyone wants to be a writer, and every year thousands of people of all ages will register for courses

in the novel, short story, magazine article, or juveniles, or will pay money to learn how to write for radio, television, the movies, or the stage. Perhaps a greater number will sign up for similar courses by mail, falling for the ads of the various "institutes" which they have seen in the classified pages of the magazines, digests, tip sheets, and manuals that flourish on the popular delusion that writing can be taught. The suckers in this category are doomed. But surely the courses offered in the regular departments, evening sessions, or extension divisions of our great and respectable universities, staffed by conscientious instructors and often excellent and well-known writers, are no swindle! I daresay they are not; but whether they can be helpful, helpful enough so that the students' time and money are not wasted, is another question. The answer to this question depends upon how these courses are taught, and upon the attitudes and expectations the students bring into the classroom.

Almost all students show up on their first day expecting to learn a set of rules, principles, or formulas for writing, and most of them, alas, leave on the last day pleased to think they have learned these rules, or bitterly disappointed and wanting their money back because they have not. But there are no such rules to be taught or learned, and if the instructor fails to disabuse his students

of this folly, either he does not know what he is doing or he is not doing an honest job. Writing is not a subject like geometry, chemistry, or surveying, where everything follows from a set of principles. No matter how commercial you want to make it, writing is an art. And an art cannot be taught out of the rule book. (If it can be taught at all!)

The rules, if there really are any, do not exist in advance, but spring into being in the course of the work. Without the work, there is no art and there are no rules. (There is nowhere a single principle, sacred to teachers of writing, which cannot be shown to have been violated in some great work, and violated not only with impunity but often with advantage to the work.) Of course, one can always set about teaching art backwards, beginning with the rules; but the danger is that the teacher will do too good a job of it, and the student, naturally given to imitation and mistrustful of his own impulses, will be made, not an artist, but a slave of these rules for life.

But don't the magazines, from glossiest slicks to crumbly pulps, all publish stories written to formula? It certainly may look as though they do, yet their editors maintain — quite truthfully, I believe — that they buy stories on their merits, not on their degree of approximation to the formula. Even at this level, writing is an art — the writer must have aptitude and heart for

his work, and above all he must believe in what he is doing.

THE TROUBLE with most writing instructors is that they fail to teach this; with most writing students, that they fail to learn it. The student continues to have an utterly false conception of writing — that it is something mechanical, which can be learned by rote, by getting the right angle, the gimmick. He never learns that it is primarily a matter of feeling.

Look at any collection of children's paintings — even poorer examples will show a love of color and the sheer fun of splashing it on. The child is discovering the medium of paint, paper, and brush, and he is making his discovery — how colors run, blend, harmonize, and change — as he works. Words are also the medium of an art — but how many students discover the ring and color and splash of words? Most people are dead to language, and the language they use is accordingly a dead thing. Perhaps when they were children, they loved the play of words as much as the play of colors. But this love has been discouraged by having nothing to live on. The great American mistrust of intellect condemns the conspicuous gift of language as an affectation: a person who makes use of polysyllables swallowed the dictionary, and poetry, as everybody knows, is sissy. Writing that has any degree of elegance must

necessarily be false, and only a man who stammers in his speech can be sincere. These prejudices have so deep a hold on the population that most writing students despise the very subject they must study, and have forever lost their ear for its charm.

For what an ugly thing is the language of the writing students, void of any rhythm but the most sluggish and mechanical, and of all but the clumsiest words. This is also the language of newspaper and radio, of the lying advertisements and the pompous editorials; of the trashy books and the cheap magazines. All our lives we are exposed to this language, and everything in our existence which is meaningless, joyless, and drab is embedded in its clichés. But this is the language which the student must *unlearn* before he can hope to begin to write.

HOW ARE YOU going to impress this on minds whose fundamental outlook is mechanical? I recall the great difficulty I would always have in breaking my classes of the use of clichés. No sooner would they learn to recognize clichés, than their minds would create new ones: Give us, they demanded, a list of clichés, so we can check our writing against it. At this point, many a teacher has given up and taken a job selling beer. How are you going to make them see that the way out of one bad habit is not through the

formation of another? How are you going to make them feel words, hear them with the delicate part of the ear, respond to all their values and select the ones they want? I tried every trick and device that the experience of teaching cast up: lecture, discussion, anecdote, acting it out; patient criticism, and sometimes sarcastic; exercises in synesthesia and automatic writing; readings in Arthur Waley's translations of the Chinese poets, and excellent prose from any source; having them take in one another's wash; making them read aloud given passages with an exaggerated play of the facial muscles that they might learn to sense the different qualities of words right in the mouth, in relation to the difficulty or ease of speaking them — all this, and so many other improvisations and assignments, in the hope that once they learned to feel language, not only clichés but all their errors would be eliminated. Maybe one in fifty got the point.

It should follow from these remarks that writing is more than a mere mechanical skill or a proficiency in a given technique; it is a way of seeing and feeling and understanding — in short, a way of life. Now a way of life is not going to be learned in the classroom; a whole lifetime may not be long enough. But it is amazing how few are the students who are willing to learn even the little one can pick up in class. The moment the instructor

criticizes their shortcomings, they begin to object: that makes it too hard! They want quick results; fifteen weeks should be more than enough time to teach them the secrets of the trade. They are not even willing to read: Why waste all this time talking about Chekhov and Flaubert? We've got to be practical! A carpenter who showed such contempt for his craft would immediately be fired. A printer whose sole interest in setting type was to make himself famous and rich, and to hell with the job, would be forced to close down in a week. But though most students cannot understand that writing is something more than mechanical, they are unwilling even to put in the time one must devote to learning the simplest mechanical skill. They will never learn a thing.

I HAVE NOT EXAGGERATED the difficulty. If anything, it is much greater, because the teacher of writing is forced to cover it up. He dare not pop out with the truth: this is useless, go home! And the students who insist that he say whether there is any hope for their work, he cannot — enrollment being a precious thing — afford to tell anything but a lie. Besides, such frankness might be brutal. Keep trying, he is forced to say, your last piece showed some improvement; or, I have no way of knowing what you may turn out if you work hard. The deception continues, and the teacher, unless

he is well paid (which happens very seldom), or quite cynical (much less rare), berates himself as a hypocrite and contemplates this disconcerting paradox: the good writers don't need help, the bad writers are beyond help.

Of the good writers, not much need be said. Most of them go their own way, and though a few have been "discovered" in the writing classes, those who have never registered have not noticeably suffered for the omission. Bad writers are necessarily our concern, and the first thing that must be said of them is that in their psychology they are indistinguishable from the good, except that they are, as a rule, more arrogant and have even greater expectations. Invariably, they come to class to be discovered, or at the very least to have their work praised, and woe to the teacher who fails to be overwhelmed. The grapevine can hang him as a crank and an egotist, and if the rumor persists, it will reach the administration accompanied by an evidence of dwindling enrollment, while rarely does a word in his defense reach official ears. To prevent this catastrophe, the instructor will often make concessions, or try to baffle or divert his classes by a variety of stunts and stratagems, all of which lower the standard of his work.

There are two kinds of bad writers: the overwriters and the underwriters. (I am assuming that the writers

who still have grammar to learn have been screened out; largely a gratuitous assumption, for when the enrollment threatens to drop, the standards of admission decline with it.) The overwriters, usually though not necessarily women, put everything in a gush of adjectives and metaphors, ill-chosen and mixed. The writing is labored, overloaded, corny and cute, with an occasional variant in the direction of waggishness, by which the housewife tries to show that she has been around. The underwriters, most often men, work in clipped, winded sentences, as though they were perpetually climbing a flight of stairs. Their writing is colorless, lifeless, and without movement or interest, though they are mindful only of action and plot. If they are literate, they imitate Hemingway or his more popular imitators; if not, they draw on their native inability, with no appreciable difference in the result. Occasionally, one encounters a piece of hermaphroditic writing, which unites the worst features of both. The mistakes underlying these wretched styles are simple (the basic trouble is always a failure to feel; only a felt experience can be rendered exactly and expressively, without the artificial excess or deficiency of the style), but they are, as I say, very difficult to treat. The most effective treatment, and the one which would do writing courses and the students who remain in them the most good,

would be to eliminate the bad writers from the class, or not to let them enter in the first place. My proposal is more merciful than it sounds. The bad writers never become better than mediocre, no matter how many courses they take.

THIS WOULD BE the ideal solution, as it would enable the few whose writing can be improved to proceed without hindrance from their inferiors; and the instructor, freed of the hopeless cases, would be able to devote more time to the educable. It is most unlikely that such a reform will ever be instituted on a large scale, as writing classes are conducted for a profit. But short of this drastic step, I fail to see what can be done to make courses in writing useful to the public.

I am aware that this is hardly the manner in which the general improvement of education should be undertaken. In ordinary classes, reform can be gentler and more gradual, and can be carried out by an improvement of texts or study methods, to say nothing of the faculty. But classes in the arts, writing among them, are not ordinary, and ought never to be presented as such. There is one very important respect in which writing classes are different: one cannot admit the existence of a middling group of students, neither the best nor the worst, without endangering the aesthetic standards such courses must preserve. An ex-

ample will make clear what I mean.

We ordinarily assume that a class of students, whatever the subject, will fall into three main groups of ability: the few very brightest, the few very poorest, and the relatively large middle group, neither the best nor the worst. As a rule, this is a perfectly workable division, and the grades (whether calculated absolutely or on a normal distribution curve) bear it out, giving as fair a measure of ability as grades can provide. But where the ability cannot be exactly quantified — which is always the case in the arts — the usual assumption governing the composition of a class turns out to be nonsense. Suppose we are grading a group of girls on their ability to dance like Pavlova. We shall not get the usual three groups, of those who do very well, well enough, and very poorly. There will be only two groups — those who do dance as well as Pavlova (for the sake of argument, let there be at least one girl) — and all the rest. For aesthetic purposes, the middle group does not exist; it is the same as the tail-end group in that it is not the best. Now since I am arguing for the elimination of the very worst students, discouraging the best from wasting their time, and denying that it makes sense to speak of a middle

group, it follows that there cannot be any writing classes at all!

THIS, TOO, would be an ideal solution. But since courses in writing will continue regardless of the arguments in favor of stopping them, I am willing to offer a compromise. These are the provisions: that it be stated at the outset that writing cannot be taught, though it can, to some extent (depending on the student's gift) be learned; that the difference between courses in writing, and courses in non-aesthetic subjects be preserved and everything possible be done to maintain aesthetic standards; that the writing classes be prevented from contributing to the debasement of language by their disregard of these standards; that a middle group be carefully selected, to include none of the very best or the very worst; that the class be small in number; that it be conducted, not for a profit, but as a service to the deserving, the loss to be covered by proceeds from classes where one need not be so discriminating, and in which enrollment can be unrestricted; and that the class be made up of people who are willing to study, to learn, even to live as writers, with humility and delight in their hard work, and who are not afraid to write from the heart.

BOOKS

William Phillips

The Wholeness of Literature

Edmund Wilson's Essays

THE SHORES OF LIGHT,* a new collection of reviews, sketches, and short essays by Edmund Wilson, is very impressive — not so much for the value of the individual pieces, though most of them are first-rate, as for the sense of Wilson's total achievement conveyed by them. The book does not include most of Wilson's longer writings; yet these short and occasional pieces display all the qualities that have made Wilson one of our most respected literary critics: an over-all range of interest and sensibility, a kind of stubborn consistency and integrity, and a remarkable gift for exposition. Some of our other leading critics — like Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, or John Crowe Ransom — to mention only a few —

have made notable contributions to the study of specific literary areas and problems. Wilson's bent, however, in a way like that of Lionel Trilling, Newton Arvin, or even T. S. Eliot, is in a somewhat different direction, bringing him closer to the traditional image of the critic, the man of letters who comments freely on life and literature and relates himself to the experience, ideas, and social forces of his time.

Wilson's achievement stands out particularly in a period of creeping specialization, such as ours, when every cubbyhole is made into a career. I do not mean to disparage all forms of specialization; obviously, much of our best work has been done by specialists. Still, the narrowing of interests to the point where scientists know nothing about literature, writers know nothing

* THE SHORES OF LIGHT. By EDMUND WILSON. Farrar, Straus. 832 pp. \$6.50.

about politics, and artists know nothing, tends to make the classic ideal of the educated man an anachronism and to reduce the writer to a craftsman. Among many of the younger critics there is, I think, an extremely dangerous tendency to think of literature as little more than the sum of its formal elements: their picture of the writer is that of a person interested only in literature, which makes one wonder how literature in the past acquired its great human and moral perceptions. In such a situation, Wilson's lifelong concern with the larger literary and social issues has been refreshing, and even if it did not have any great intrinsic merit, his work would still have been of enormous value in keeping alive the idea that all writing, creative and critical, is only one aspect, however important, of man's total experience.

EVEN the incidental pieces in this book indicate how sensitive Wilson has been to the literary impulses of the time. Some of his earliest writing, at the beginning of the twenties, took account of the changing literary climate and of the new figures then emerging. His comments on the first works of Hemingway, Dos Passos, Cummings, Anderson, and Van Wyck Brooks are remarkably astute, considering that these writers had not yet fully revealed themselves and that Wilson, himself, was a young critic.

Very early, too, he hit the mark on Cabell and Dreiser, who, he thought, were overrated, on Lardner, who, he thought, was underrated, and on Lawrence, who had not yet been properly evaluated. His record also includes a recognition of the talents of poets like Leonie Adams, Louise Bogan, Allen Tate, and John Crowe Ransom, when they had just begun to publish. And Wilson did much to stabilize the erratic criticism of the work of Henry James.

But of equal importance is Wilson's responsiveness to movements and events. His comments on H. L. Mencken's influence seem even in retrospect remarkably just. And while he has been, I think, a little lukewarm about T. S. Eliot's achievement, he was right about some of the bad effects of Eliot's influence. Several of his essays on the literary situation in the twenties in which he laments the lack of intellectual controversy show an early awareness of what I believe is one of the most important problems of our culture: the gap between our creative energy and our critical consciousness. Later, in the thirties, when the Communist movement invaded the literary scene, Wilson's role was close to being a spokesman for the critical conscience of the period. For one thing, he was one of the few writers of his generation to keep his balance, mainly because he took the trouble to study the litera-

ture of Communism. If, like many other serious writers, he was affected momentarily, it was largely because he did not want to immunize himself against the ideas and passions of what was taken as the prevailing idealism. But he questioned from the outset the pompous claims of the Communist writers, and he soon rejected all the appeals of the totalitarian mind.

SIMILARLY, at one time or another, Wilson has come to grips with the doctrines of Freud, Pareto, and Nietzsche; he has written about the texture of American life and the American language, the intellectual effects of the depression, the assumptions of liberalism, the nature of the creative process (which he described as a form of "triple thinking"), and the relation of American to European culture, in addition to countless studies of a more purely literary nature. Though all these excursions into different fields have not been equally sound or fruitful, still the attempt to extend the literary imagination into such a variety of experience is a high — and unfortunately rare — form of humanism.

Every writer has his special gift or bent. Wilson seems to be at his best in those areas where personal experience merges with literary achievement. Some of his most effective writing brings into play his own life, or that of an author he is discussing, or the flavor of a period,

as though he were reconstructing the human elements that went into a literary work or movement and the total effect they have on a reader. Thus, his expository essays on Pushkin, Joyce, and Proust were masterful recreations of the content, personality, and moods of these writers. And in *The Shores of Light* some of the reminiscences of people Wilson had known intimately are wonderfully sharp and engaging as Wilson organizes his picture of them around a literary or intellectual center. The opening piece, in the form of a "Prologue," on the late Christian Gauss, Dean at Princeton University, recalls the influence on his students of this stern, dedicated, but flexible teacher, "the kind who starts strains of thought that he does not himself guide to conclusions but leaves in the hands of his students to carry on by themselves." There are also sketches of F. Scott Fitzgerald, describing his maniacal postures and some of the frenzy of his life and his work, and of other writers of the twenties, in which Wilson communicates the mixture of adventure and confusion running through the literary life of the decade. Perhaps Wilson's most moving piece in this vein is the "Epilogue," a kind of autobiographical synopsis of his attachment to Edna St. Vincent Millay, whose short career flamed across the twenties. Understandably, Wilson makes little effort to evaluate her poetry. Instead, he creates a kind

of episodic profile of a birdlike wildness, innocence, and detachment, and though Wilson does not draw the parallel, one suspects the enchantment Wilson felt in her person might also be a clue to the quality of her verse.

I SUPPOSE literary history will class Wilson as a social critic, and recently there has been a tendency, mostly on the part of the younger formalist critics, to brush him aside as an extra-literary critic, who has not done enough to illuminate immediate literary texts and problems. At bottom, this attitude represents a difference in critical approach, and while it is true that Wilson's inclination has not been toward the purely textual analysis of literature, I think the criticism of him on this score has been very unfair and represents a sectarian judgment. For, if Wilson, like Parrington and other social critics, has taken literature as part of history, unlike most of them he has not dissolved literature into history. The simple fact is that whatever ideas Wilson may have about art, he is above all a man of sensibility, and it is his sensibility that lies at the center of all his criticism. Actually, his method has been to find the basic mood and intention of a literary work, and then to connect it with the pattern of the author's life, and with literary tradition and social history. (In critical terms, the method might be described as an

attempt to locate the meaning of the text not only in itself but also in the context; a piece of literature is seen as a fusion of moral, psychological, social, and aesthetic elements.) Wilson's approach is suggested in his memoir of Christian Gauss, who evidently helped form Wilson's literary character, and who seemed to represent for Wilson a classical, humanist spirit, a throwback, in a way, to such figures as Matthew Arnold who tried to see the "wholeness" of life and literature.

Despite his range of interests, however, Wilson's criticism has been built on his taste and his feeling for the spirit of an author and his work. Actually, he has always been more interested in the imaginative than in the purely theoretical side of art and of other intellectual disciplines he has touched on from time to time. His studies of the Marxist movement, for example, grasped the essence of its ideas and social effects, but they belong more to the field of literature than to social theory. Even his attitude to aesthetic questions has been "literary" rather than "philosophical." But I think he has been more illuminating in this field than most philosophers and sociologists, who may pride themselves on the cogency of their thinking, but who have usually had little feeling for either literature or for experience. It seems that the nature of art in our time is such that the most rational minds have rarely had any-

thing intelligent to say about any of the arts, and have usually been allergic to the mysteries and irrationalities of the creative process. Anyway, as one looks back at Wilson's career, it is evident that his influence has not been as the exponent of a literary position or a set of explicit ideas, like Taine, or Parrington, or Van Wyck Brooks, or even Sartre, but rather as a kind of luminous sensibility, discriminating, dissecting, re-creating — a man of the middle, mediating between extremes, and clearing the driftwood out of the literary mainstream.

On purely literary grounds, it is amazing to see how many of Wilson's judgments have stood up, which is, I am sure, the final test of a critic's accomplishment. If he has occasionally overrated some writers and underrated others, this is the occupational hazard of any critic bold enough, as Wilson has been from the beginning, to evaluate most of his contemporaries. After all, literary judgments cannot be determined in advance; on the contrary, they come out of the kind of free-swinging criticism exemplified by many of the pieces in *The Shores of Light*, in which Wilson is quick both to appreciate any show of talent and to expose sham and mediocrity, even if it means challenging the most sacred traditions and the most popular reputations.

Perhaps I can best evaluate Ed-

mund Wilson as a critic in a personal manner. When, as a young writer, I was trying to find my way in the world of literature, the two critics who made the strongest impression on me were T. S. Eliot and Edmund Wilson. Eliot introduced me to the feeling for tradition, to the modern sensibility, especially in verse, and to the idea of a tighter, more exact, more formal approach to literature than was commonly accepted at that time. Wilson, whom I came to later, opened up the social and human side of literature, and set an example of a contemporary taste, roaming through the past and present, assessing new writers and relating them to our new historical experiences. I especially remember, when Wilson edited the literary section of the *New Republic* and regularly wrote the lead piece, how I would look forward to his gracefully provocative comments on some contemporary writer or problem, or his essays re-creating the spirit of some older figure. Even when I disagreed with him, I was charmed by the working of his sensibility, moving in and out of his subject, in an easy, winding prose, smooth as the purring of a well-tuned engine. And if, as I suspect, the calm surface of Wilson's writing conceals his inner contradictions and tensions, it also represents a kind of literary achievement — the mastery of one's feelings and ideas through the medium of style.

Clichés and Shibboleths

Where Is the Western Spirit?

A Declaration of Faith. By Herbert Agar. Houghton Mifflin. 237 pp. \$3.00.

THE TASK Mr. Agar sets for himself is a worthy one, the restatement of the principles of the faith of Western man. The West is certainly in its foundations Christian, not to say Catholic, and many Christians may ask what restatement is needed. Are not those principles what they have always been? Mr. Agar, himself a believer, would seem to say no. They must be restated for our age — for “atheists and agnostics and anticlericals” as well as for the religious.

There is something to this. But in Mr. Agar’s book it results in one of the most deplorably confused amalgams of good intentions, chowdered history, and false logic to appear in many a long year. For he cannot see that the ancient and honorable principles which he espouses are utterly inconsistent with the attitudes of contemporary liberalism. He has breathed an atmosphere, as president of Freedom House and a scion of the liberal

press, that is saturated with the accumulated clichés of the accepted enlightenment.

In generalities he indicates the central truth of politics, that total power in one set of hands inevitably kills the individual soul and ruins a civilization. When Arnold Toynbee shows him the way, he can see that the subservience of church to state in Byzantium led to just such a totalitarianism. When Lord Acton points the moral, he can even see the virtues of divided powers in the federation of peoples under the Hapsburg monarchy.

When he deals with his own time, however, two shibboleths of the modern liberal cant dominate his thinking. According to the first of these shibboleths, private property and capitalism are inherently evil; whereas common property and socialization are inherently good. According to the second, nationalism and war are the worst evils conceivable (this part is always stated); so that war is worse than the loss of freedom (this part is never stated). Mr. Agar is utterly blind to the contemporary truth that every step

toward socialization weakens the bulwarks which separate economic from political power. Capitalism in the West built those bulwarks which for the first time in any civilization made possible governments of radically limited powers. "Capitalism" to Mr. Agar is an "economic witch-word." He is against the all-powerful state, but he seems not at all terrified by the galloping strides of state power, as bastion after bastion of private property is destroyed.

Since, according to his second shibboleth, war is the ultimate evil, and since Mr. Agar would not propose surrender to the Soviet Union in order to prevent it, he must minimize the Soviet threat. He must magnify the mote in our eye a thousand times till it balances the great beam in Russia's. ". . . We, not the Russians, have contrived a masterpiece of slaughter . . . ours is the leadership in the decline of civilization. . . . We must examine our own minds, not our neighbors', to learn what has come into the world to make us feel that wars of annihilation may again be necessary."

Let us grant that Marxism and the ideas of modern socialism arose in the West; but it is in Russia that Leninism and Stalinism were developed. And Russia is neither a province of the West, nor (*pace* Messrs. Agar and Toynbee) a part of Byzantine civilization. It is a new barbarism, armed with half-

digested ideas and a technology borrowed from the West, combined with a statecraft borrowed from Byzantium.

Great men's errors are dangerous to little minds. Arnold Toynbee is a philosopher of history whose major insights compare with those of Augustine and Vico, Hegel and Spengler. But he, too, has his contemporary axes to grind, and he is at his weakest when he rides the hobbyhorse of world government and the overriding evil of war. What is worse, he allows it to affect his judgment of history, and develops the idea of Russia as an Eastern Christian Civilization in order that he, too, may minimize the beam and maximize the mote. The worst of Toynbee appears in half-digested chunks in Mr. Agar's book, so that he sees the struggle of the West against barbarism as, astonishingly enough, a continuation of the Fourth Crusade, when the West diverted its attack from the Turk to Byzantium. "Today . . . Russia and the West once more confront each other with the incomprehension of a Greek scholar and a Roman business man in the days of Plutarch, of a bureaucrat at Constantinople and a Frankish baron in the days of Charlemagne." Is Russia then an effete civilization and we the new rising barbarism? Is Stalin a scholarly framer of the Roman law and Churchill the amalgam of a get-rich-quick campfol-

lower of the Roman legions with a Germanic plunderer from the hinterland of the Rhine?

The pages of *A Declaration of Faith* are crowded with false historical analogies like this, and with such exercises in false logic as his maintaining that the difference between Russian and Western attitudes toward human rights "is only accidentally allied to Communism."

When it comes to current politics, the principles that Mr. Agar claims to uphold fall like tenpins before the shibboleths of his milieu. In the whole world the United States Senate is the only deliberative body left with full and unlimited debate and final protection for the minority, even if that minority be only one or two men. In this book there are by casual count eight separate direct and indirect attacks upon that body — and all because of its committees' exposure of the Communist conspiracy. To Mr. Agar it would seem there is no conspiracy to extirpate the values of the West. The Communist leaders were convicted under the Smith Act simply

for "preaching their creed." We "risk a new cycle of religious wars if we revive the doctrine that rulers may tell the citizens what to think."

His authorities are the finest — Lord Acton and Sir Frederick Pollock, Georges Bernanos and Arnold Toynbee; his sentiments are estimable — natural law, natural piety, and the objective sanctions of a real truth and a real God; but their spirit, which is the spirit of the West, is missing.

The essence of that spirit is the value of the individual man. Whether for the Christian to whom the relationship is between himself and God (no matter what ecclesiastical forms he may utilize to mediate the awesome reality), or for an unbeliever like Christopher Marlowe, celebrating the heaven-storming drive of a Faustus, the meaning of reality is: "this man" and the universe. For Mr. Agar it is always "we" — uncounted millions in whose cozy manyness the responsibility to be a lonely carrier of the Western spirit is lost.

FRANK MEYER

Ways of Treason

Diagnosis and Judgment

***The Traitors.* By Alan Moorehead. Scribner's. 222 pp. \$3.50.**

***Spies, Dupes, and Diplomats.* By Ralph de Toledano. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 244 pp. \$3.50.**

ALAN MOOREHEAD'S *The Traitors* is a restrained, highly competent, and interesting account of three British scientists who betrayed atomic secrets to Russia. It is also a study of the motivations of traitors, of the process of confession, and of the strangely intimate relationship between criminal and policeman. Moorehead is a wonderfully accurate reporter who is also gifted with the qualities of human understanding and compassion.

The questions the book attempts to answer are: "Why these men in particular should have turned traitor when the vast majority of their colleagues did not . . ." and "whether the security services in Britain and North America blundered over these men. . . ." Writing as an English subject, Moorehead goes out of his way to exonerate Anglo-American political leadership of sloth and incompetence.

But the facts that he reports contradict this interpretation and constitute a formidable indictment of that leadership.

The Soviet spy ring documents were turned over to Canadian authorities in September, 1945. Prime Minister King immediately conferred with both Truman and Attlee on the matter, who advised him to "keep silent." For four months the spy case was shrouded in official secrecy. It was not until February 15, 1946, that arrests were made and a Canadian Royal Commission of Inquiry was authorized. This belated action was forced on officialdom because Drew Pearson was about to expose the spy ring in his February 16th syndicated column.

The British security record on Klaus Fuchs is equally interesting. In 1934, the Nazi consul at Bristol denounced him as a Communist and this charge was naturally regarded as of little weight. It is more significant that there seems to have been no investigation of Fuchs' close association with the German Communist GPU agent, Hans Kahle, in Canada in 1940. Although Fuchs'

name was found in the notebooks of a member of the Canadian spy ring, he was not removed from secret work. The British apparently did not check the Fuchs dossier in Kiel after Germany's defeat. As late as 1948, the "controlled schizophrenic" (as he described himself) continued to do secret scientific work and to betray it.

Bruno Pontecorvo was probably a more brilliant atomic physicist than Fuchs. After the arrest of the latter, MI-5 discovered that both Pontecorvo and his wife were secret Communists. Yet they were allowed to travel to the Continent without surveillance, from there to escape to the U.S.S.R. It is reported that Pontecorvo is at present making hydrogen bombs for Stalin.

Moorehead's effort to find a unifying psychological pattern for the three atomic spies is challenging, but not entirely successful. Possibly, there is no common denominator. Following Rebecca West, Moorehead stresses their laboring under the illusion of the omnipotence of the individual conscience — a paranoid view of self which comes close to the Greek sin of *hubris*. Certainly, there is truth in this, but is it not an oversimplification? In Fuchs' case, dissociation, incapacity for any genuinely intimate human relationships, exhibitionism, and prodigious exploits with the bottle were combined with a desperate need to "belong" to some group or other, much as a

schoolboy needs to belong to a gang. When Fuchs ceased to be a spy, his world became Harwell. He felt remorse because he had betrayed this microcosmic unit of society which had accepted him.

Elsewhere, Moorehead suggests that denial of God paves the way for ideological treason. Yet there are millions of skeptics and materialists who never contemplate treason and feel no need to submerge themselves in messianic movements. For men with anemic self-esteem such as Klaus Fuchs, the case is different. The tragedy for the West was that Fuchs found a malevolent faith instead of a beneficent one.

THE FIRST HALF of Ralph de Toledano's *Spies, Dupes, and Diplomats* is an account of the Sorge spy rings in China and Japan which stresses their more sensational aspects and is weak as to facts. The Asia story continues through Pearl Harbor, the wartime intrigues of pro-Communist officials to undermine the Nationalist government, the *Amerasia* stolen documents case, the role of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and finally the decisions which accelerated Red victory in China and encouraged the invasion of Korea.

The final chapters contain a powerful indictment of General Marshall, Dean Acheson, and the junior architects of Asiatic disaster who advised them. De Toledano's partial summary of the McCarran Com-

mittee evidence is a skillful exposition of the labyrinthine maze of the American Communist conspiracy against China and of the pivotal role of the I.P.R. in that conspiracy. De Toledano gives documented evidence of alleged misrepresentations and false statements made by Secretary Acheson when under oath — a matter that would seem to warrant further inquiry.

One of the main weaknesses of the book is its structure. On its last page, the ghost of Richard Sorge limps past muttering, "It is all according to plan." Yet the undeniable links between the Sorge apparatus and certain I.P.R. personnel do not justify the inference of a single, coordinated conspiracy.

Moreover, Sorge's role is inflated. The jacket blurb informs us that shortly before his arrest the Soviet agent "informed Stalin that Japan planned to attack Pearl Harbor," and on page 4 de Toledano repeats this inaccurate statement. In reality, Sorge merely reported that Japan would strike southward against England and America. He did not know that Pearl Harbor was the target. He was not nearly as well informed on Japanese naval plans as President

Roosevelt. Nor did Sorge know — as de Toledano claims he did — the time of the attack, for, on October 18, 1941, when he was arrested, it had not been decided.

Of these two books, the first examines the causes and course of treason as a psychological phenomenon; the second surveys them as a moral phenomenon. Moorehead seeks to be a diagnostician, de Toledano a judge. Moorehead's narrative is perceptive and brilliant, but political naïveté and lack of distrustfulness mar his conclusions. As to de Toledano's book, while sometimes wrong as to facts and unsound in interpretation, it has one great virtue — it reveals the complex ways in which Communist apparatuses helped engineer an Asian policy suicidal to American interest. Infiltration is certainly less clearly understood than espionage; it is always more difficult to prove; it is frequently more dangerous. Defense of infiltration agents is becoming the last refuge of a mechanical and backward liberalism which refuses to recognize that liberty does not cover conspiracy and that free societies have the duty of self-defense.

NATHANIEL WEYL

BOOKS IN SHORT

Brazilian Provincial

Epitaph of a Small Winner. By Machado De Assis. Noonday Press. 223 pp. \$3.50.

MACHADO DE ASSIS' Brazilian classic, a pleasant novel in the eighteenth-century manner, is not an original work or a great book; but then Machado himself makes no such claim. He aligns himself in his foreword with Stendhal and Sterne, and frequently indicates his debt to Voltaire in the body of the book. *The Epitaph of a Small Winner* is entertaining on a high level, and one would be content with just this — if the translator, William L. Grossman, and at least one reviewer had not grossly exaggerated Machado's accomplishment.

Unhappily for Machado, he was identified, even in his own time, as Brazil's leading man of letters and classic writer. Such a distinction should signify a combination of power, breadth, and uniqueness. This Machado, for all his genuine talent, simply does not possess. The story of a Rio de Janeiro aristocrat of the post-Napoleonic period, *Epitaph of a Small Winner* is, when you get right down to it, the tale of a dilettante written by an epigone.

The dilettante (Braz Cubas) is clever in inventing cute conceits (e.g., an "anti-melancholy plaster") and sharp in baring sham. The description of his mannered love affairs is the best thing in the novel, though here *Epitaph* is in no sense an advance over the French and English models, and certainly not equal to the moderns with whom it has been compared, Hemingway and D. H. Lawrence.

But Machado's ideas — about politics and philosophy in particular — are simply not first-rate, whether he is bringing Aristotle up to date, or spoofing the cult of optimism ("Humanitism"). He suffers from a fault common to many good craftsmen who attempt novels of ideas: the story moves well, the characters are fine in their own right, but the thinking in the book either intrudes on the story and character, or else seems an affectation in them. Braz Cubas' pessimism rings true as part of the offhand weariness of a weak-willed aristocrat, but the iconoclastic paradoxes expressing this pessimism cannot really be taken seriously. They turn out upon examination to mean far less than they seem to imply with their deliberately casual manner. In a sense, Machado, like his hero, falls in love with his own

happy phrases ("the voluptuousness of misery," "vanity springs from . . . the viscera," "the equivalence of windows"), and becomes the captive of his fancy.

Two facts about *Epitaph of a Small Winner* strike one as curious. First, that a quarter-breed who was a white-collar worker should, by employing eighteenth-century European models, have so aptly characterized the sterility of the upper classes of nineteenth-century Brazil. Second, that a work so *deliberately* derivative should now be considered a *national* classic. These curiosities form the two sides of a triangle whose base is Brazil's cultural lag.

Machado, if he had been a man of genius, might have been able to create a true national classic by going to the deeper roots of Brazilian culture, to the hinterlands as well as the metropolis, the Negro slaves and Indian peasants as well as the landowner and politician. But, being talented instead, he took the best material there was at hand and worked it up into a very fair imitation of originality. It was no fault of his that Brazilian culture was a late provincial reflection of the European, or that he was not a genius. But it is important to make a clear distinction between Machado's sharp competence and the genuine uniqueness of his really great contemporaries — Balzac, Dickens, Dostoevsky — which was partly the uniqueness of their national cultures,

partly that of their own genius. Machado unfortunately had the benefit of neither.

This is a hard judgment to have to pass on so ingenious a writer. Yet we should be even harder on the true originals of literature if we were to accept a talented epigone at his face value.

JACOB SLOAN

Teen-Age Romance

The Last September. By Elizabeth Bowen. Knopf. 303 pp. \$3.50.

MISS BOWEN'S novel, *The Last September*, which has just been re-issued, is a superficial work. It does not tell a story, or create a character, worth remembering. It is, indeed, a kind of teen-age romance, with the difference that the heroine is not married off in the end. By ending her story in this manner Miss Bowen throws an air of sophistication over her book which only thinly disguises the fact that *The Last September* does not contain a fresh idea or an unusual situation. All is smooth, all is polite.

According to the subtitle this is "A Novel of Ireland in the Nineteen-Twenties" and the ostensible purpose of the author is to recreate the mood of the Anglo-Irish during the struggle for Irish independence. To judge from Miss Bowen's book, this mood was one of boredom and disinterestedness. But then, Miss Bowen knows little about Ireland.

Her occasional attempts to reproduce the Irish idiom are startling:

Indeed, Miss, she is in great distress; and she always looking and starting and craning up the boreen. It is torn in herself she is; distracted for Peter and dhreading he'll come. It would dishearten yours to be with her daily and nightly the way she is, the poor woman. And the military from Clonmore have the hearts torn out of us nightly, and we stretched for sleep, chasing and charging about in the lorries they have.

Begorrah, Miss Bowen, but 'tis the terrible woman you are surely to be after giving us such a blasht of Irishness and us unpurctected from it entirely.

The story of *The Last September* is a thin one, so that the author has to eke out almost every page with a pseudopoetic paragraph of description.

The screen of trees that reached like an arm from behind the house — embracing the lawns, banks and terraces in mild ascent — had darkened, deepening into the forest. Like splintered darkness, branches pierced the faltering dusk of leaves. Evening drenched the trees; the beeches were soundless cataracts.

The trouble with Miss Bowen is that she apparently is unaware that this kind of writing does not get anywhere: in a Preface she analyzes her technique and her motives as though she had written a masterpiece instead of a quite ordinary

novel. The publisher, I think, should have at least restrained the author in the Preface.

PETER KAVANAGH

African Tragedy

The Rising. By H. R. Lenormand.

Thames & Hudson. 271 pp.
\$3.00.

THIS SOMETIMES rather slow-moving novel by a French playwright turned novelist takes the reluctant reader, who has been promised "strife, love, violence and suffering" on the dust jacket, into pre-World War II French North Africa. There, high and dry in the Algerian plateaux, in the stagnant atmosphere of a small colonial town, half French, half Arab, M. Lenormand dwells resignedly on the frailties and fallacies of French colonialism. But since M. Lenormand obviously knows what he is writing about, and has a flair for atmosphere and character, the reader is eventually rewarded with some good observations on an area hitherto best known as the stamping grounds of the French Foreign Legion.

M. Lenormand's story revolves around the abortive uprising of several of the poorer nomadic Arab tribes, provoked by the efforts of a young Russian girl agitator. This shapely and ruthlessly idealistic woman, Natalie (a somewhat two-dimensional character), is out to promote her own Communist revo-

lution, far from home and without the sanction of the Bolshevik Party. (In party lingo, she is a deviationist, for she believes the party has betrayed the revolution while she alone keeps faith with the cause of the oppressed.) But the momentary flare-up she causes is soon drowned out in the eternal apathy of the sun-baked desert. All that remains are a few graves in a sand-swept native cemetery.

The nicest thing about M. Lenormand's book, however, is not the "strife and violence," but the pathetic figure of an aging, frustrated, and resigned French colonial official, M. Dollan, whose humanitarian notions have been at odds with his bureaucratic functions for twenty years.

He, like Natalie, wants to help the natives under his tutelage, but he knows that violence and bloodshed won't cure hunger and disease. But since he has fallen hopelessly in love with the girl, with her youth and her misguided idealism, he sits back while Natalie rouses revolt. Eventually, after Natalie has been buried in the desert sand, he is relieved from his post and ends up a broken man, "gone native" in the corrupting solitude of a lonely oasis. This, indeed, is the most rewarding part of the book.

The very French futility of the situation, where neither individual goodwill nor violence and agitation can change anything for the better, is perhaps best summed up in a letter a roving priest sends to the retired Dollan:

The real issue is between men like us and all the other Frenchmen in Africa. . . . Are we only to suffer and meditate, confronted by that mountain of crimes erected since ancient times by every invader of the African soil? Each nation, each generation, each individual has added his stone. And now the mountain is so high that it cannot be levelled by any desire for equity, any act of justice. One might, on the contrary, say that every attempt at reparation adds to the sum of the evils falling on this unhappy country. The crimes of the conquest will never be redeemed. Let one just man arise among us — it is not justice he brings but new crimes. . . . Where lies the lesser evil? Possibly in routine, in the blind application of the law, in accepting injustice.

M. Lenormand does not answer that question. He does not provide us even the hint of a solution. But then M. Lenormand is no politician, but a crafty novelist, and a very French one at that.

G. St.

*Down
to
Earth*



FIRST SNOW

Alan Devoe

IF A POLL could be taken to find out what aspects of the natural world, into which we are all born, are the most loved and meaningful to individuals among us, the results might be surprising. It might turn out that the great and grand passages in the poetry of earth are not in fact the ones that touch you or me, or the housewife around the corner or the farmer over the hill, with the special poignance, the breath-taking and nearly heartbreaking arousal of response. "Beauty" is an easy word, and the earth is full of it: grandeurs and magnificences, crashes of color and pattern, shaded delicacies of loveliness. But the immense, the astounding, the clearly "beautiful," is not at all necessarily what most moves and spellbinds us. What may do the depth-moving, what may cast the spell, may be something as plain as a weathered fence post with the sunlight striking it just so. It

may be a sound as simple as the chirp of crickets in a fireplace corner on an autumn evening.

It is an extraordinary splendor and a dumbfounding piece of luck to be alive on this planet. It is no less than miraculous to find ourself, eyed and eared, equipped with modes of apprehension and comprehension, aboard this fabulous star where sunrises come up in daily grandeur, seasons go wheeling in stunning succession as to the pulse-thud of the universe's arterial beat, and the life-experience teems with a fantastic abundance of sights, sounds, scents, things to be touched, creatures to be watched, emotions and thoughts to be entertained. We are overwhelmed in happenings, drenched in the abundance of outpoured creation. As awareness opens into rationality, in the youth of each of us, we know this. In a way of speaking, it is the first thing we know. Our spirit leaps

as in a gigantic gesture of hungry embrace, to take all this earth-magnificence to us, to possess this flower, that star, this shaft of sunlight, that singing bird, that soaring mountain. We put out a hand to touch this lichen-mottled stone, and it is an experience as huge and solemn as a sacrament. We see this burst of blossom on a common mullein in a common meadow, and we are in a blaze of creaturely relish. The sunlight touches our flesh with its potent warmth, or the moonlight lies in its cold radiance upon a world of shadows, and we could dance or howl or weep with the unutterable magic.

SO IN THE BEGINNING. But then later, of course, we take that selfward turn which is the symbolic tragedy in the exile stories in all religions. We are outcast from the Garden, as the Christian religion puts it particularly; and that is perhaps the most piercingly precise way it can be put. "I am I," we say. "I am precious, precious, I; I will look out for me." And so, looking out for me, we cannot any more look out toward the far hills, still soaring in the blue dusk. I am become the object of my own obsessing embrace; how can I have awareness, any more, of the touch on me of the warmth of the sun? I had been a creature, my hungry spirit going out in a devouring love toward the primary creative source of all begetting, toward the

eliveness and otherness "out there," toward the Whence of all this; and I had been nourished. Now I have turned interiorly — (the first man who drew or carved upon a rock the picture of a snake with its tail in its mouth lived undoubtedly aeons upon aeons ago, not long after the dawn of things had passed and we were started on our way toward the tragedy of noon) — and now I am alone, and afraid, and not fed.

The Garden is still there, blooming where it was. The same hot sun, all warm in fruitfulness, is still blazing over all of it, and the same cold moon still magicking the night shadows. But I have put myself in exile; and for me these lamps have gone out. There is still the blossom on the common mullein in the common meadow; but as the wild apocalyptic image of the Christian symbolism has it, I am cut off from the felicity of this flower by the blazing sword of a stern angel of outrage. Here is the lichen-mottled rock, right where it always was, but I cannot put out my hand now to its wonder, and repose in the treasure of that, for the arm of my spirit is otherwise dedicated. It is wrapped around the shoulder of myself, which I have thought to make my treasure.

Well. So it goes. So it is. There must be a million sheaves of religious literature to tell the familiar and terrible story; and we are now on our way to accumulating a million sheaves of the literature of psychi-

atry. Whoso would save his life must lose himself. You can ring as many changes on it as you like, putting it in an antique Persian parable, putting it in a Mediterranean legend of how a man saw his face in a forest pool and presently all the forest and sky disappeared forever and all the gods withdrew, or putting it if you wish in the semiclinical phrases of the *mystique* of current psychiatry. The story continues universal. We all know it, exactly speaking, whether or not we have heard it. For it is our own story. Whether we have seen it written, in the latest paper by the last neo-Jungian, or have heard it recited, by a masked man who beats a drum as he speaks and waves a feathered wand over the flickering fire amid the tribal huts, we know this story. We have acted it.

IF OUR EXILING is universal, however, that is not to say it is total. Each one of us, lost as he may be, still has in him, somewhere in the profound depths, but somewhere still arousable, the original self of his first being, the original creature-self, boy-self, dawn-self, call it what we like; so that in this sense everyman of us is haunted forever by his own legend of a Golden Age, and goes forever with a memory, however deep, of the spirit that was his, as he may put it, before a Fall. This Original inside us, this primitive sleeper, may be buried very deep, very layered-over, very lost; but

does not die. It is only in exile, not killed. It only sleeps, but is wakable. And what may wake it, for its unspeakably poignant moments of stirring and old, old remembering, of course, are our occasional seeings or hearings or smellings, when a particular mood is upon us, of some thing that was peculiarly close and dear to us, in an ancient, ancient time, when our heart was all outgoingness and praise.

The sweeping grandeurs of mountains, it may be, cannot now break through our barriers of exile and touch this sleeping self. The things that are patently "beautiful" may be nearly powerless to do it. The things that are tremendous and nearly unthinkable dramatic — like the sun — may scarcely be able. The sun? The sun? The blazing golden shafts of it may pour through our office window — the light shafts of this power that brings seeds to flowering, kindles the earth, makes the stuff of clay turn into the stuff of aliveness under its chemistry — and we may hardly be distracted from the sales graph we are studying in dedication. The sun? The sun? We may only stretch out a hand, without any part of our mind having been touched or our awareness taken or any stir at all of the deep, deep, sleeper-rememberer, and pull down the shade.

But then some very little thing may happen, some tiny and even preposterous thing, and this pierces

through to us like the thrust of a sword. It pricks the sleep of our sleeper, and for an instant he awakens, and for that instant we are caught in a quivering of remembrance. Perhaps all that catches our eye is a stone here, a casual pebble on the path; but there is something about the look of it, just here, just so, with the brown dirt of the earth around it and the sun catching it in a warmth of light, just so, that suddenly speaks to us of another stone we knew long, long ago, a stone when all stones were magical and big with wonder and delight, a stone when we were close to stones and loved them and were in that relationship to all the life-adventure whereby it was a Garden and it was ours. Perhaps all that catches our ear is this cricket singing, in the corner of the fireplace, on this autumn day. But for an instant we hear another cricket on another earlier day. Perhaps the scent we catch for this instant's awareness in our nostrils is only the smell of withered leaves, or flowing brook water, or baking bread, or the morning; but the drift of it reaches deep to our sleeper, and he stirs, remembering, and in this instant we are undone.

For you, for me, for the other man, there may be this or that thing about the world that is our waker, our remembrancer. A poll would surely find that there are infinities of different things. There are perhaps, though, some nearly universally

common things. For those of us in the north, such a one may be the first snow.

IT COMES DOWN now, now in November. We look up from our desk, here where we are working absorbed over the typewriter, the ledger, the graphs, charts, reports, all the plannings for power. We look out from the room where the Autumn Sales Conference is going on, the convention is going on, the canasta is going on. There it is. There are the first flakes falling. There it comes, out of the forgotten sky, down toward the forgotten earth, washing the world between. There it is falling now, silently.

We look, and we say this means it is time for us to be having to put on our overshoes again. We look and we wonder if this is going to work against Fall Sales, perhaps; and maybe this will mean that the car will stall at the station; and did we pay the last bill to the fuel dealer? We look . . . and then suddenly, for an instant, it is something else.

Suddenly we see, for an instant, with the eye of our sleeper, awakened. Suddenly, for an instant, it is not now, but a remembered time, and not this now-self but an earlier self, knowing. This falling whiteness is a splendor, an invitation and a miracle. This is something to rub on our faces, and jump in, and exult in, and love. Why, this is that snow which falls on the fields, hushing and

whitening, making a spell. Why, this is that snow (murmurs the sleeper, whispering) that is so lovely and so promising and such fun that it makes you feel grateful almost unbearably. Why, this . . .

IT IS POSSIBLE we may turn from the window, in this instant now, and say to our secretary that somehow we feel rather odd and queer, and think we'll go home. It is possible we may just walk away from the sales graph, the typewriter, the work-sheets, and just disappear down the corridor, in so strange a silence that people look at us concerned. Or likeliest, of course, we may just close our eyes for a moment, and steady our-

selves perhaps for a second with our hand on the edge of the desk, and wait for the instant to pass and the sleeper to go back down and in again, and under and deep, to his sleeping and lossness. And then it becomes Now again, and the clatter resumes.

We may do any of a good many odd and foolish kinds of thing, when the first flakes come falling, in silence and whiteness, now in November. Odd and foolish. But the world is inhabited, awarely at least, only by human beings; and all of these are knowers, each in his own way, of this common story of ours, because enactors of it; so there will be no one to laugh.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) of *The American Mercury*, published monthly at Concord, New Hampshire, for October, 1952.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: The American Mercury Magazine, Inc., 11 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Editor: William Bradford Huie, 11 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Managing editor: —; Business manager: Robert Hodgson, 11 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

2. The owner is: American Mercury Magazine, Inc., 11 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Russell Maguire, Chairman of the Board.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

(Signed) LESLIE YARBROUGH, President, The American Mercury, Inc.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1952.

Anna H. Beinert, Notary Public in the State of New York
Qualified in Westchester County, No. 60-5248100.
Certs. filed with N. Y. Co. Clerk & Reg.
(My commission expires March 30, 1954.)

DRAUGHTS OF OLD BOURBON

William Bradford Huie

Mr. Chaplin and the Fifth Freedom

The Sovereign Right to Be a Fool

AT THE MERCURY OFFICES we probably have more fun than anybody else in the publishing business. We are a group of healthy extroverts, generally tolerant of the milder forms of human cussedness. Several times we have considered hiring a staff psychiatrist, like the ones they have around the Luce, Cowles, and Marshall Field enterprises, but each time we have interviewed an applicant, we have wound up pitying the poor, troubled fellow, and decided to struggle on, supported only by bourbon, Beethoven, and Bartlett's *Quotations*.

The three of us who do most of the editorial slaving are comfortable men, with sound digestions, and all fairly hopeful for the human race. One of our editors is a twenty-six-year-old fellow from Germany, with a mustache, who looks tolerantly on

American goings-on after swivelling an editorial chair in embattled West Berlin, and who is at ease in many languages and in any literate company. Another is a tough-minded thirty-year-old from Brooklyn, who can contemplate life as it is without trembling, and who can discuss even that senator from Wisconsin with no dangerous rise in blood pressure. And then there is the editor, forty-one and from Alabama, who can confront McCarthy and Corliss Lamont on television on alternate evenings without dyspepsia.

For those prospective new customers who occasionally inquire what the MERCURY is about, perhaps an accurate reply is that it's a sort of mixture of Berlin, Brooklyn and Birmingham. Our only real enemy is any form of tyranny over the human mind, so after we've worked up

a lather over some bureaucrat or bogman (to use a word we learned from a contributor), we can usually relax and debate the lighter issues exercising our countrymen.

THE MERCURY's latest chuckles have been furnished by the case of McCarran, McGranery *et al.* vs. Charlie Chaplin. The case has set off great gushing wells of indignation, both Right and Left, and both have seldom appeared more ludicrous.

The *New Republic*, one of the outfits which seem farthest removed from reality in our time, ran an open letter to Mr. Chaplin from Graham Greene. Mr. Greene, of course, is a member of the new school of English authors who write so engagingly about sin and salvation. His letter is funnier than any picture Chaplin ever made.

The mood is established in an editor's note which sneers: "McGranery, whom we do not consider fit to polish Chaplin's beloved shoes . . ."

Well, we don't think too much of McGranery either, but what-the-hell, those are harsh words to apply to old Mac, who, after all, is the most honest attorney general we have had since Howard McGrath, who in turn was the most honest we have had since Tom Clark. Maybe McGranery has a slavish mind. But think what delusions Chaplin's mind is slave to!

And Chaplin's *beloved shoes*!

Mr. Greene begins: "I hope you

will forgive an open letter, Mr. Chaplin: otherwise I would have added to that great pyramid of friendly letters that must be awaiting you in London. This is a letter of welcome not only to the screen's finest artist . . . but to one of the greatest liberals of our day."

So there we have it! A really, truly *great liberal*! We have only to examine Chaplin to understand what a truly great liberal is.

Mr. Greene closes his letter with an appeal to English authors to boycott Louis B. Mayer for giving money to McCarthy's campaign, then tosses both Chaplin and McCarthy — and presumably Louis Mayer — into the international hopper by exclaiming: "This is no national matter!"

Okay, let her rip! Let her be international! We don't want to be isolationists in this matter!

On the Right, the big berthas of the Hearst press have given Chaplin such a cannonading that his shirt tail, quite likely, won't hold shucks. And Miss Hopper kissed him off in this fashion:

"No one can deny that Chaplin is a good actor. He is. But that doesn't give him the right to go against our customs, to abhor everything we stand for, to throw our hospitality back in our faces. I abhor what he stands for. Good riddance to bad company!"

In such a situation we have to move slightly out of the line of

fire, compose and refresh ourselves. The two most reliable authorities on Chaplin the man, not the artist, are his old friends, Sam Goldwyn and Rupert Hughes.

Now about Chaplin's being the Great Liberal of our time:

HUGHES: Charlie, you're rich. Yet the individual poor man can die of starvation on your doorstep and you would kick him off.

CHAPLIN: Yes, I hate the dirty unwashed!

There's real liberal sentiment, we'd say. A truly great liberal. And a humanitarian. His heart beats for the Common Man.

GOLDWYN: Chaplin loves power.

As no one else I've ever met, he loves power. Money contributes to this sense. Therefore he sticks out for his large contract and hoards his earnings. But it affords him just as much consciousness of power to think that he, Chaplin, can afford to walk away from actors and stagehands assembled on a set. He does that, too.

Goldwyn wrote that in 1923, and few have ever accused him of not being a sharp judge of human flesh and nature.

GOLDWYN: Chaplin's prejudice is against anything which interferes with his own personal freedom. The censor, the income tax, any supposed obstruction — are hateful to him in the degree to which they infringe

upon on that coveted sense of power.

HUGHES: Charlie, I have known some pretty rotten people, but I consider you the most hardened person I have ever known. You wouldn't walk into a room and talk a few minutes to raise fifty thousand dollars to save the lives of starving children in Eastern Europe.

The man is obviously a *very* great liberal. One of the greatest of our time. We can understand why his shoes are *beloved* by the *New Republic*.

HOWEVER, before Chaplin can be tossed into the McCarran crusher, two precious freedoms in this country, often forgotten, need to be remembered. One is the Fifth Freedom: the freedom to be a stinker and a damn fool; and the other is the Sixth Freedom: the freedom to detest anybody you regard as a damn fool or a stinker.

There is, in this great country, the sovereign right to be a stinker. And there is the sovereign right to detest a stinker. To use the word of our good friend, Miss Hopper, there is the sovereign right to "abhor." But there is also the sovereign right to be abhorred. Chaplin is perfect for the illustration of these rights. He is a genuine, twenty-four-carat, ring-tailed stinker.

Take patriotism. Pride of country is old and honorable. Chaplin, far

from ever evidencing any pride in this country, has never missed an opportunity to express his contempt. And while this may be deplorable, *it is not illegal*. We have no law to enforce patriotism, to punish people for being unpatriotic; and few of us want such a law.

Take citizenship. Most persons who are allowed to come to these shores are anxious to become citizens. A few, like Chaplin, are not. We have no law for the enforcement of citizenship, and until now we have not forcibly deported aliens unless they broke our laws.

Take generosity. Most of us like generous people. We hold generosity to be a virtue. We think a rich man should give to the poor. No one, not even his good friends, Hughes and Goldwyn, ever accused Chaplin of generosity. He loathes the poor. But it isn't illegal in America to loathe the poor. It may be contemptible, but it isn't illegal.

Take Communism. To plot with the Communist Party, to sit in its councils, to actively conspire against the government of the United States, this has now been adjudged illegal. But no one has accused Chaplin of this. For Chaplin to have been an active Communist, he would have been forced to give the party large sums of money — and this he would never have done, or at least not often.

Chaplin's repeated expressions of admiration for the Soviet Union are

but expressions of contempt for this country. He doesn't love the Russian people or even Stalin. He loves no one but himself.

But even if Chaplin does "admire" Communism, this is not illegal.

Take aid to our armed forces. Most Americans feel that during wartime, at least, generous efforts should be made to express appreciation to the men serving in our armed forces. Al Jolson probably sacrificed his life by making his last tour in Korea. American women have stood in freezing, early morning cold to pass hot coffee to traveling soldiers. Yet during the entire Second World War Chaplin wouldn't walk across the street to make a single appearance for the USO.

But this isn't illegal; and few Americans would insist that we pass a law forcing every citizen to show respect for members of the armed forces.

Take lechery. Most persons deplore it; and few, perhaps, envy it. I won't speak of Chaplin's reputation on this score; it is well known. But there is no law in this country against lechery, and no member of Congress is advocating one.

AN IMPORTANT POINT in the Chaplin case is this: he is not an employee of the State Department or of the Central Intelligence Agency. He is not even a third assistant economic analyst in the Department of

Agriculture. If he were a public employee, the fact that the majority of the public despise him might be reason enough to discharge him. No majority in a free country should be *forced* to pay the salary of a man they despise.

There is no sovereign right to a government job in this country. Calvin Coolidge once settled this when he fired a cop off the Boston police force for no other reason than that a large body of citizens of Boston didn't like what the cop was saying. Sure, the cop had a right to free speech, Coolidge ruled, but he had no sovereign right to remain a cop.

The professional liberals have tried hard to confuse this issue. They have tried to hold that an employee has a *right* to a government job, and that he must be adjudged guilty of something *illegal* before he can be fired. But this is fallacious. We don't have to prove that a man is a Communist before he can be fired from the State Department. We as a people have a perfect right to fire him for any good and sufficient reason.

When a man is fired from a public job, he isn't being deprived of life or liberty without due process; no basic right is being violated. Job security is nowhere guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.

But Chaplin is not a government employee. He is a taxpayer. Despite his hatred of the income tax, he is a financial supporter of the govern-

ment. Therefore he does not have to comport himself for the approval of other taxpayers.

Chaplin is not a public employee but a private entrepreneur. He writes stories, makes films of them, acts in them, and offers them for sale in a free market. No one has suggested that his films are subversive or obscene. So his films are not illegal. No American has to pay to see these films. Any American who doesn't like Chaplin is free to make his sentiments known in any way he pleases.

So Chaplin enjoys all the rights which this free government secures to the individual free enterpriser, and these are precious rights.

And one other point needs to be made. Much has been said about Chaplin's not being an American citizen. As far as the legalities go, this is irrelevant. No distinction is made in our courts between those men who are American citizens and those who are not. Nor do we have one code of ethics for the treatment of citizens and another for foreigners. Such distinctions are not drawn in free America. Chaplin has lived here most of his life, owns extensive property here, pays his taxes, and is married to an American citizen who also has rights.

SO THE "CHAPLIN CASE," for reasonable men, comes down to this. He has the sovereign right to make himself obnoxious. Any

American who chooses has the sovereign right to abhor him. If Mr. McCarran and Mr. McGranery have any evidence that he has violated our laws, if they can prove beyond reasonable doubt that he is a member of the Communist conspiracy against this free government, then they should confront him down at Ellis Island and give him back to Graham Greene.

But if all they can prove is that Chaplin is a stinker, then they are only repeating what has been common knowledge for thirty years,

and they should leave the man and his family alone.

Perhaps democracy should be defined as the art and practice of the toleration of fools and stinkers.

The MERCURY's tradition is one of castigating fools, not suppressing them. From Mencken on we have always supported the Fifth and Sixth Freedoms. Or to quote that notorious, sensible, and witty Tory Dr. Johnson: "Every man has the right to his own opinion, and every other man has the right to knock him down for it."

The Effects of Folly

» The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly, is to fill the world with fools.

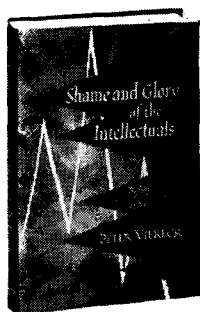
HERBERT SPENCER, *ESSAYS*, 1891.

» When I was fifteen I knew much more than my father. But when I was twenty-one I noticed that the old man had learned a lot in those six years.

MARK TWAIN.

Coming in November . . .

Peter Viereck



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